

COPY

Mr. Clifford F. Morehouse
The Living Age
744 North Fourth Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

My dear Mr. Morehouse:

After a careful study by each of us of the proposed plan for Joint Ordinations, we have met and gone over it in detail. We wish to thank you and your associates for your prompt reply to our request for a plan and to assure them and you of our deep interest in what you propose. Certainly among the various possible procedures which must be examined is "Joint Ordination". Such ordination can, of course, be planned without either of our churches questioning the validity and effectiveness of the ministerial orders of the other.

In response to your request for suggestions from us, we venture to offer the following:

Under section 1, in the third line, we should amend the sentence to read "set apart as presbyters (which word is to be regarded as signifying minister or priest within the scope of this agreement)". In our Church "presbyter" would ordinarily mean minister, but the word is sometimes used to describe the status of a "ruling Elder" who, by vote of the "Session" of which he is a member is representing his church in the Presbytery of jurisdiction for a specified period.

Under section 2, we think that the word "candidate" should read "licentiate" and so also in the other sections. "candidate" in the terminology of our form of Government is a man who under the supervision of a Presbytery is being prepared for the examinations required for "licensure" or in other words for his becoming a "licentiate." A licentiate corresponds more nearly to your "deacon".

Under the same section we should wish added:

"Licentiates of the Presbyterian Church shall give evidence of their study of the Doctrine, Government and Worship of the Protestant Episcopal Church, and deacons of the Protestant Episcopal Church shall give evidence of their study of the Doctrine, Government and Worship of the Presbyterian Church". We believe such knowledge essential before accepting joint ordination.

Under 4, in order to make clear who is meant to offer the prayer, we think the word "the" before Presiding Minister, should be changed to "its" to connect it with Presbytery.

With regard to the Chalice, we are unable to find this referred to in the Ordinal in the Book of Common Prayer, and we would raise the question whether it be not unwise to introduce any ceremony or form not already in the official standards of either of our two churches

We should like to ask that a custom of long standing - (it goes back to the early Seventeenth and probably to the Sixteenth Century) - be included immediately after the Bible has been placed in the hands of the newly ordained minister. We suggest the following wording:

"Then the Bishop or Presiding Minister, followed by the other ministers participating in the ordination, shall take the ordained by the right hand, saying, "We give you the right hand of fellowship to take part of this ministry with us".

We would raise the question whether the recitation of the Creed belongs where you have placed it. If the Communion is to follow, does it not belong in the Communion Office in the Prayer Book? With us, we should place it after the Scripture in the part of the service which precedes the act of ordination.

We would also ask that among the questions demanded of the ordinand, the following vow be included:

For a Presbyterian:

"In accepting joint ordination, do you promise due regard to the Doctrine and Discipline of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America?"

Answer - "I do so promise".

For an Episcopalian:

"In accepting joint ordination, do you promise due regard for the Doctrine and Discipline of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America?"

Answer - "I do so promise".

Finally, while we are deeply interested in this plan, we are persuaded that there are important situations in which both churches should work together in which the appropriate minister is already ordained in one of our communions. We, therefore, think this plan insufficient without the Concordat to cover such cases. Further, there was in the Concordat a provision for the connection of Bishops with Presbyteries and of Moderators of Presbyteries with Diocesan Conventions in an associated capacity, and we think this most desirable for the promotion of fellowship. Accordingly we are unanimous in asking that this plan of Joint Ordinations be not considered as a substitute for the Concordat, but rather as the basis for a more inclusive plan of which the Concordat shall be a part. It seems unwise to have only persons yet to enter the ministry of either of our churches doubly authorized to administer the Word and Sacraments in both of our communions.

We wish to emphasize the fact that no publicity whatever should be given to the contents of this letter. Our understanding is that this matter is still in committee stage.

Again assuring you and your colleagues of our hearty appreciation of your proposal and our earnest prayer for God's blessing on our future work together, we remain

Fraternally yours,

(sgld.)

~~Wm. H. C. C. C.~~

The Secretary presented the Minutes of the conference held with the representatives of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Pittsburgh. It was voted to make these Minutes a part of the record of the Department, and they are fully inserted as follows:

Minutes of the Joint Meeting of the Department of Church Cooperation and Union of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., and the Committee on Relations with other than Methodist Churches of the General Conference Commission of the Methodist Episcopal Church on Interdenominational Relations.

The Joint Committee assembled in the First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh, Pa., on the call of the two secretaries at 10 A.M. on January 30, 1929.

On behalf of Mr. Thomas D. McCloskey and himself, as hosts, Bishop Herbert Welch called the conference to order at the appointed hour, briefly welcoming both bodies, and placed in nomination President J. Ross Stevenson, of the Presbyterian Committee, as chairman of the joint committee. He was unanimously elected.

Dr. Stevenson thereupon took the chair and called upon Bishop William F. McDowell and Dr. W. O. Thompson to lead in prayer, which they did with fervor.

On nomination of Dr. Lewis S. Mudge, President Eugene M. Antrim was elected secretary of the joint committee.

Members present:

Presbyterian Group

Dr. J. Ross Stevenson, Chairman
Dr. Lewis S. Mudge, Secretary
Dr. W. O. Thompson
Dr. Robert E. Speer
Dr. Joseph A. Vance
Dr. William F. Merrill
Dr. Henry C. Swearingen
Dr. W. H. Black
Mr. Holmes Forsyth
Mr. T. D. McCloskey

Methodist Group

Bishop Herbert Welch, Chairman
Dr. Eugene M. Antrim, Secretary
Bishop W. F. McDowell
Bishop F. D. Leete
Dr. H. E. Woolever
Dr. J. H. Race
Dr. Ray Allen
Dr. O. W. Auman
Dr. E. H. Cherrington
Dean James A. James
Mr. F. A. Horne
Mr. E. R. Conder

Telegrams regretting their inability to be present were received from Dr. F. W. Mueller and Mr. I. Harland Penn.

On behalf of the Methodist Committee, Bishop Welch, its chairman, made an opening statement representing its cordial and unanimous sentiments respecting organic union with the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. and other "like-minded" bodies, and outlined the status and powers of the Methodist Committee. (See statement on file.)

Dr. Stevenson, chairman of the Presbyterian Committee, sincerely reciprocated the sentiments expressed by Bishop Welch. (See statement on file.) He quoted from two letters sent respectively by Alfred Wheeler, of the Methodist General Conference Committee on Fraternal Correspondence, and H. T. McClelland secretary of a similar committee of the Presbyterian Assembly meeting in 1884 - forty-five years ago - expressing fraternal sentiments of cordial character respecting the church to which each was sent. (See Bound Vol. Pres. Gen. Assembly Mins. 1884, p. 129.)

By request a brief statement of "Wherein Presbyterians and Methodists are alike", previously read before the Methodist Group, was made by Dr. Ray Allen.

Informal discussion of the earnest desire for organic union and comity continued throughout the remainder of the morning. Those taking part were: Dr. Thompson, Dr. Mudge, Dr. Vance, Dr. Merrill, Bishop McDowell, and others.

A recess at 12:15 P.M. was taken until 2 P.M. for luncheon at the Wm. Penn Hotel.

At 2 P.M. the joint committee reconvened, continuing the informal discussion of the morning, Dr. Robert E. Speer speaking to the inspiration of the conference.

Bishop McDowell then moved: (1) That a committee of six be appointed to prepare a statement to be presented to the two churches; and (2) that two other committees be appointed for further study and report at a subsequent meeting on (a) the problems of faith and order involved in the proposed organic union, and (b) the problems of the life and work of the churches.

After full discussion, in which the following took part, Dr. Allen, Dr. Auman, Dr. Cherrington, Mr. Conder, Mr. Horne, Dean James, Bishop McDowell, Dr. Thompson, Dr. Merrill, Mr. McCloskey, Bishop Welch, and others, the motion was unanimously passed.

The committee members named were as follows: Dr. Stevenson, Dr. Speer, Dr. Merrill, Bishop Welch, Dr. Allen, and Dr. Cherrington. This committee was requested to bring in nominations for the two committees ordered in the preceding motion.

At this point greetings were received and read from representatives of the Northern Baptists and the Disciples of Christ meeting in Pittsburgh this very day for the purpose of conferring about the union of those two bodies. The letter read as follows:

Pittsburgh, Pa.
January 30, 1929

To the Presbyterian and Methodist Episcopal Committees:

Brethren:

We are happy to learn of the meeting of representatives of Presbyterians and Methodists to consider ways and means of closer fellowship between

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your great religious bodies, and we are glad to inform you of a similar meeting now being held at the William Penn Hotel of this city for the same purpose of promoting friendship and cooperation between the Northern Baptists and the Disciples of Christ. Wishing you joy and good success, and the blessing of our common Lord, we are

Very truly yours,

L. N. D. Wells
Elijah A. Hanley

The following reply was prepared and sent to that Joint Conference:

Pittsburgh, Pa.
January 30, 1929

To the Northern Baptists and Disciples of Christ Committees:

Brethren:

We acknowledge with feelings of high respect and brotherly love the greetings of the Joint Conference of the Northern Baptists and the Disciples of Christ who are met in this city of Pittsburgh at the same time the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. and the Methodist Episcopal Church are having a joint conference for conversations respecting questions of church unity and comity.

It seems to us that these conferences must be under the direction and inspiration of our common Lord, meeting, as they are, without consultation or design, for similar purposes in the same city and at the same time. We pray that the gracious Father of us all may guide you in your deliberations and bring us all more closely together in the essential unity of the Spirit and the Body of Christ.

Very truly yours,

J. Ross Stevenson
Eugene M. Antrim

The Joint Committee adjourned at 4:30 P.M. to reconvene in Parlor G of the Wm. Penn Hotel, at 8:00 P.M.

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Promptly at 8:00 P.M. the Joint Committee reconvened in Parlor G of the Wm. Penn Hotel. Bishop Welch called the committee to order in the temporary absence of the permanent chairman, Dr. Stevenson. Prayer

offered by Dr. Stearingsen. The minutes of the preceding session were read and approved. Dr. Vance reported the receipt of a telegram from the National Staff of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. expressing its hope for positive advance in our negotiations.

The report of the committee appointed in the afternoon to prepare a statement was then read by Dr. Stevenson. The report was as follows:

"By authority of the actions of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church and the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. recognizing the obligation of the organic unity of the churches which rest immovably on the rock of Christ, this conference of the Commissions appointed by the Methodist Episcopal Church and of the Department of Church Cooperation and Union of the Presbyterian Church, to which the consideration of the matter of organic union of these two churches was referred, has taken up its task. It rejoices in the duty assigned to it.

It recognizes the difficulties in the way, but it cherishes this ideal of organic union as the goal to which we are bound to direct our earnest and immediate effort, and it expresses its resolute purpose to proceed at once to the consideration of the practicability and method of the organic union of the two churches which it represents.

It was voted to provide immediately for the appointment of two committees, one to consider the questions of polity and doctrine involved, and the other to consider the questions of the administrative work and property interests of the two churches, to report at a later meeting of this Conference.

It was voted also to advise the Boards of Home and Foreign Missions of the two churches, of the conviction of this Conference that it should be the continued aim of these boards and of our two churches to promote cooperation and unity in work, and to support, as far as possible, the effort for organic union of all the evangelical churches on the mission fields."

It was moved by Bishop McDowell, and seconded by Dr. Thompson, that the report be adopted. It was unanimously adopted.

Bishop McDowell then moved that each of the other committees authorized at the afternoon session, consist of six members, three from each church, the personnel ~~for~~ of the same to be left to the nomination of the two chairmen. Dr. Thompson moved that the two chairmen be made members of the two committees, one of each. Both motions prevailed. The committees named were as follows:

Administration and Property Rights

Dr. H. C. Stearingsen, Chairman
Dr. J. A. Vance
Dr. W. O. Thompson
Bishop Herbert Welch
Bishop F. D. Leece
Dean James A. Merrill
Mr. E. L. Conder

Doctrine and Polity

Bishop W.F. McDowell, Chairman
Dr. Ray Allen
Mr. F. A. Horne
Dr. J. Ross Stevenson
Dr. L. W. Mudge
Dr. W. P. Merrill
Dr. Robert L. Speer

on motion of Dr. Mudge the nomination was confirmed.

It was then voted that we adjourn to meet at the call of the two chairmen. The motion prevailed.

At this point Dr. William H. Black, who had been delayed by train connections, came in and made a moving statement, expressing his fervent desire for the organic union of the two bodies.

After prayer by Bishop Leete the Joint Committee adjourned.

Eugene M. Antrim
Secretary.

Address of Mr. Robert E. Spear, Moderator from the
General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in
the U.S.A., to the General Synod of the
Presbyterian Church in America, Dallas, Texas.

It would not be fair to say that the invitation to the
General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America to meet in
Dallas was a matter of course. It was a matter of great
possibility of a visit to our own country to see the project of our Lord
"that all may be one." It is our invitation that has changed to
bring to this General Synod of the Presbyterian Church in America from the General
Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. In the light of this
I present you with the evolution of our General Assembly:

"Our Department has been in conference with the Fact Finding Commission
of the Presbyterian Church in America. Our two churches have so much in common that
the union of the two seems to be a natural and logical result. Throughout our history
in America, running long parallel lines, we have been in close personal
relations. On the foreign field the churches of the two have united.
In this country our territories overlap and we have constantly intermingling
communities of men and women. Our doctrine, our government, our worship and
our aims are the same. We are convinced that we should be taken looking to
the union of the two churches in America and the Presbyterian Church,
U.S.A."

It is our hope that our General Assembly, in its meetings to the
approaching meeting of the General Synod, will be able to work into
the resolutions of the General Synod, in a possible, or union, in
the future, to be appointed a special committee to the meeting of the
General Synod of the U.S.A."

This evolution was adopted by unanimous vote in its expression, Dallas,
Texas as an official policy of our General Church. In a report to the General
Synod of the Presbyterian Church in America, Dallas, Texas, in 1941,
and your General Synod to our General Assembly in 1941. It will be well to
recall the very words of that resolution. In 1941, our General
Assembly to the General Synod:

"The General Synod of the Presbyterian Church in America, in its
meeting in Dallas, Texas, in 1941, to unite with the Presbyterian Church in
America in a single ecclesiastical and theological institution. But because
of language, racial, and other differences, the proposed union, which
was first a result of the General Synod of the Presbyterian Church in
America in 1941, is still in progress."

It is the hope of the General Synod, Dallas, Texas, in 1941, to
hope that our General Synod, Dallas, Texas, will be able to unite all
the churches in Dallas, Texas, in a single ecclesiastical institution.

'Notwithstanding the seeming difficulties in the way, I humbly apprehend', said he, 'that this may be practicable, and I yet hope to see it accomplished.' That genius has not yet arisen; but the Holy Spirit of God is ever stamping the conviction of the importance and propriety of closer relations of some kind, whether federation or organic union, upon the hearts of His people.

The efforts to promote friendly correspondence between the Presbyterians, the Associate Reformed and the Dutch Churches in America were initiated in 1784. Committees met and articles of agreement were drawn up in 1785, and again in 1800, but the results were not very satisfactory. In 1822 a new effort was made between our two Churches, and the exchange of delegates or letters has now continued for sixty-four years. Nor do we forget the still more earnest efforts for closer relations, which was begun in 1873, under the leadership, respectively, of your beloved Dr. Adams, who has since entered upon his reward, and of our beloved Dr. Ganse, whom you took from us to our great regret and loss. These Committees were continued for several years, but through causes, which need not now be referred to, did not accomplish so much as was generally hoped for.

But this correspondence in general, not to speak of other special efforts, has not been in vain. It has led to a better understanding of each other; it has softened asperities; it has excited a spirit of true brotherly affection; and, indeed, its whole tendency has been toward more hearty cooperation, federation and such closer union as God, in His infinite wisdom, designs. For surely it was not the purpose, in the correspondence between our Churches, that we should forever be simply telling each other how much we are alike, and how much we love each other; but rather, after strengthening each other's hands, as we have done for a century past, at length to come closer together, and so dispose our forces, under the common Captain of our salvation, in mutual help and love, as actually to bring to its consummation, as far as in us lies, the great work for which our Divine Redeemer lived and died.

Those blessed results, federation and union, have already been partly accomplished on our mission fields. In Amoy, China, English and Scotch and Dutch Presbyterians form one ecclesiastical body. In Japan, the union is still more general and complete. And an Overture will be before our General Synod in June, proposing that our Synod shall advise and direct our Classis of Arcot in India to seek union with the other Presbyterian bodies in that country.

We rejoice in all these signs of a growing desire for union, such as the Providence of God shall bring about. We pray equally for you as for ourselves that God may bless all your efforts to extend the Master's kingdom. Your success is our success, and ours is yours. We are already one in Christ, and we need to be more heartily one in labor, without a trace of jealousy or rivalry. We ask you to unite with us, and beseech God to pour His Holy Spirit upon each of our Churches, giving us such a new baptism from heaven as shall enable us to realize the fulfillment of the Saviour's High-Priestly Prayer in John XVII."

Dr. Corwin's address reminds us that there is a long history back of this significant hour. This overture for the union of our two bodies is no novel or artificial proposal. The report of the fact-finding Commission of the General Synod summarizes the repeated efforts of our Churches in the past years to find a basis of full organiz unity. Let us note some of the more significant incidents and utterances of the fathers in the great generations

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elements fit into the situation. Perhaps the fundamental principle is the difference of view between those who believe in association with the American Board on the principle of a common faith and a common moral, voluntary society, and those who believe in association with an international obligation of the Church as such, and so as to lead to voluntary action but not to care for by the Church as part of its general mission. The attitude taken by the General Synod and by the General Assembly of the United Church of Christ is a conviction in the two Churches.

While it was still under the name of the United Church of Christ, in 1843-44 correspondence between the two Churches was resumed. It was a very friendly body of letters and was so full of interest that the two Churches should be brought into the General Synod and the General Assembly with full deliberative privileges. Later, in 1854, the number of delegates was reduced from two to one in each of the two Churches of each congregation. In 1848, however, the two Churches were brought together, so that they could work together in union with the other churches of the denomination in the United States (the Old School churches, the Free Church of Scotland, the Wesleyan Methodist Church, the Baptist Church, the Presbyterian Church and the Association of Protestant Churches). The Committee of our Presbyterian General Assembly called the Committee of the United Church. This Committee accepted the name of the United Church of Christ in its entirety and it is a pleasure to the two Churches that a proposal which is entirely faithful to the trust of the people of the two Churches to do the work which is no longer the work of the spirit in the work of the Church:

"In that general prayer, when our Lord commanded us to be faithful immediately previous to the condemnation of his disciples, he said: 'This petition I make of his disciples, that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they may be one in us, that the world may know that thou hast sent me.' The union of all the members of the household of faith, in the truth and fellowship of the gospel, should be not only their aim, but the aim of all the

...to be ignorant of the fact that many will truly believe that they exist in a false faith. They are all positive in their faith and to you, a true Christian is the living God, and they are all persons of the same spirit. In the present world, however, they are ignorant of the knowledge of sanctification, and consequently that spiritual union which exists with all the members of the body of Christ. It is not perfectly united. Their views of divine truth, so long as they are through a glass, darkly, and know only in part, and are expected in a greater or less degree to differ, and consequently, difficulties will arise, in the way of manifesting their union before the view of the world. But the prayers and the active efforts of the followers of Christ, a great benefit be afforded to the object of bringing it to the unity of the faith the different portions of the Christian Church, so that they may not only so, but appear as the view of the world, one body in Christ.

Generally, the Church of Christ is at present divided into a great variety of distinct organizations. From this state of things it results, that instead of marching forward with a united front against the common foe, each of the different strands of the different organizations of the Christian Church is bent upon opposing each other. And not infrequently, the world beholds the strange spectacle of different portions of the Church opposing each other with a virulence in proportion to the nearness of their separation to each other. Over this state of things the Church has long had occasion to mourn; and it seems to us here, that some very systematic efforts should be made to bring into Christian union all the different portions of the household of faith. And in so far as some of the distinct portions of the Church are concerned, there is the greatest encouragement to labour for the accomplishment of this object. It is being already accomplished in a small degree to each other.

In our country, there do exist some of the most distinct portions of the Christian family, who profess the same views of evangelical truth, as exhibited in their different standards, and substantially the same, and who are of the same ecclesiastical order and name. Could these various portions of the Church be so united, so as to act in concert, it is easy to see that much might be accomplished in advancing the interests of the common Christianity, and in promoting the universal diffusion of the Gospel, than is practicable in our present divided state. With a view to prepare the way in our country for the consummation of the object so desirable, your Committee have to submit for the consideration of the Convention, the following resolutions.

RESOLVED, That the Church of Jesus Christ constitutes one body, of which we are the living head and consequently should be organized as to exhibit to the view of the world, one appearance, as well as the reality of unity. And whereas, the present divided condition of the Church is in a measure at least inconsistent with our unity; therefore,

RESOLVED, 1. That it is the imperative duty of the followers of Christ to aim at bringing about a union of all the different portions of the household of faith, upon a scriptural basis.

RESOLVED, 2. That in the judgment of this Convention, it is not only desirable, but practicable, to effect a closer union than that which now

which among the bodies which are not represented, whereby they may be more successfully accomplishing the great work for which the Church was established.

IV. 1. That the views of a general system of evangelical truth, as exhibited in the statements of these different Churches, namely, in the Westminster Confession and Catechism, the Articles of the Synod of Dortrecht, and in the Millberg Catechism, are substantially the same, therefore,

Resolved, 2. That it is the duty of these churches to cultivate toward each other the spirit of fraternal affection, to exercise Christian forbearance, and to cooperate in all scriptural efforts to promote the common Christianity.

Resolved, 3. That in the judgment of this Convention, with the exception of God's praise is an interesting sort of religious worship, and while, for the present, it is left to the different churches to employ whatever of the authorized versions now in use may be most suitable to them, the sacred songs contained in the book of Psalms are ever, and suitable for that purpose, and any intimation that they contain a spirit inconsistent with the Gospel, is to be regarded as a reflection on their original author.

Resolved, 4. That such is, practically, without any surrender of principle, an interchange of ministerial services, or a concord, and that the different churches pay respect to each other's acts of discipline, and sustain each other in all scriptural efforts to promote the good order and to preserve the purity of the Church.

Resolved, 5. That in the prosecution of the work of missions, it is desirable that these different churches, so far as practicable, should act in concert, and missionaries in the exercise of their ministry being accountable to the particular body with which they are ecclesiastically connected.

Resolved, 6. That in the promotion of a closer and extending and more intimate intercourse between these different churches, it is desirable that a correspondence be maintained, either by letter or by relation, as may be judged most expedient.

Resolved, 7. That these resolutions be recommended to the consideration of the different churches represented in this Convention that they may report their judgment in the premises, to a future Convention to be held in the City of Albany on the first day of November next, at eleven o'clock A.M.

The first of the amendments proposed was that the Commission should be empowered to make recommendations to the Government regarding the appointment and removal of members of the Commission. The second amendment proposed that the Commission should be empowered to make recommendations regarding the appointment and removal of members of the Commission. The third amendment proposed that the Commission should be empowered to make recommendations regarding the appointment and removal of members of the Commission. The fourth amendment proposed that the Commission should be empowered to make recommendations regarding the appointment and removal of members of the Commission.

The Commission has considered the amendments proposed and has decided to accept the first, second, and third amendments. The Commission has also decided to accept the fourth amendment, subject to the following conditions: (1) that the Commission should be empowered to make recommendations regarding the appointment and removal of members of the Commission; (2) that the Commission should be empowered to make recommendations regarding the appointment and removal of members of the Commission; (3) that the Commission should be empowered to make recommendations regarding the appointment and removal of members of the Commission.

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2. That the Commission should be empowered to make recommendations regarding the appointment and removal of members of the Commission; (3) that the Commission should be empowered to make recommendations regarding the appointment and removal of members of the Commission.

3. That the Commission should be empowered to make recommendations regarding the appointment and removal of members of the Commission; (4) that the Commission should be empowered to make recommendations regarding the appointment and removal of members of the Commission.

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think you only of some of the noblest of our countrymen
the Reform Church in words applied to the Reform Church
the Presbyterian Church.

In 1858 Dr. Fairbank's Farewell address was printed in our
Lithograph of 1858, but spoken as follows:

"It is my pleasant duty, as president of the General Synod of the
Reform Church in Canada, to have the honor of reading this address.
This is a day solemnly set apart for the purpose of thanksgiving,
part of it to thank God for the happy union of the Presbyterian
Church with us.

"We are, as you see, for 'Christ' - 'our common Father' - the
sovereign God - which leads us most lovingly to the
center and standpoint of the Reform Church. 'Christ first, and
not Christ last, or last at all.'

"For this, we are, for the liberty of the Christian Church
in all its parts - with a special reference to the
Reform Church, a church only, - hold the truth, be true to
our faith, a living without all other considerations."

"I mean, as you see, by the idea of the Christian Church
respect to the common Father, personal piety, political freedom,
and action of the Church in kindred unions, - all of them are
a general Synod, like those of the General Assembly, have a right to
their own."

"We stand with you, also, for the common property of the
Reform Church in the thirty years of its existence. We are
the proper field of our mission - work with us, - and it is
to be considered as a parallel in kind with us. It is
with the Reform Church. In all these things we are united."

"Our faith, our hope, our love, and
our efforts are our own."

"It is our duty, as a denomination, to stand in front of God. But
in doing so, we are not to be conservative - we are to be
progressive - and we are, with the Reform Church, - we are not to be
indifferent. The Reform Church, like the Reform Church, is
not to be indifferent."

"It is our duty, as a denomination, to stand in front of God. But
in doing so, we are not to be conservative - we are to be
progressive - and we are, with the Reform Church, - we are not to be
indifferent."

"In doing so, we are not to be conservative - we are to be
progressive - and we are, with the Reform Church, - we are not to be
indifferent. The Reform Church, like the Reform Church, is
not to be indifferent."

In this substantial sense of faith is practiced by you."

In 1898 your report on the subject of Dr. Fairbank's
address was published.

"In a more usual sense, however, the Church has not only its
policy, but in our primary interest, a kinship with the
theology, in an unusual sense, or human nature, of a service of God in the
world."

We hear some voices from the ground, but calling to us to go. We
 feel that our obligation to the world is that we should use the
 light we have to take up their task, to fulfil their dream, to carry forward to comple-
 tion what they began to do. I know some in the world who are pelt-
 ed with stones, without being able to turn their backs on their persecutors.
 Around them stand the angels of God, and they pray for them, and the persecution
 of the men who are being killed is not the end of our mission in the world.
 If they could speak to us, would they not say just what Lord is an Burrill
 said in the Stoughton case? "If they call to us, shall we not
 go up to do what they desire?" They look for the unity of our Church.
 We must believe that now is the proper time to come. Lord they look still
 for the unity of our Church. Shall we then call them to stop back and
 wait?

I spoke to one of our best people of this country, and he said to me about this
 evening and our gathering here today in the hall of the city, "Yes, I remember
 our hope and our hope in London in 1871. It all looks so bright and
 hopeful then, and so plain. I see you will only call again." Must
 we call? Must we go on to the point where we are now? Must we go on
 to achieve in the future, to do what we are doing? Surely we must not
 stop. The people are not satisfied. In 1871 the people of the Church
 voted that it must remain permanently entirely separate and independent but
 within the same denomination in the same Protestant Church of the world.

But it will be justly asked, why should we go on? The unity of our
 Church is a great thing, but it is not the end of our mission in the world.
 There must be other things which are just as important for us. Shall we then? Well,
 we must believe in the livingness of the Convention of 1878. We must believe in the
 of the Confession of the Church in the world, to be able to do so.

In the first place, we must believe in the livingness of the Convention of 1878.

they believe, in God and they not only believe but feel it. They love it and love it. But while they are open to all that is new and true, they are immovably loyal also to all that is old and true. An especially important fact is that both believe in the necessity of belief. They are not those who think that unity is possible without a basis of unity in faith and conviction, and they hold with unrelaxing tenacity to the historic and biblical faith, to the full New Testament gospel. There is no possibility whatever of approval of union proposals by our Church and General Assembly on any other basis than this. And this is your attitude too. In fact an identical attitude here is full basis for organic unity in one policy and one doctrine.

Furthermore we two Churches are on a common ground in training. We have common friendships and congenialities and understandings from us. We have the common educational and intellectual. I have spoken of the interchange of theological instruction in the past but I have not done so. Princeton Seminary has called Dr. Zwerger to its Chair of Theology and Dr. [redacted] is helping in its Old Testament department. It is rumored that it is seeking further help from your ministry. And [redacted] Dr. Van der [redacted] in Le Will and you [redacted] Dr. [redacted] in New Brunswick. There are no two churches in America more naturally akin and cognate in tradition, outlook, characteristics, purposes and spirit than our two Churches.

And above all these things we are bound together by our common problems and tasks. The report of your Committee has spoken of the situation in some of our Eastern cities like New York, Newark and Albany. The question on which we stand is the plain issue of honesty and common sense in the use of our resources to meet human needs and to cope with difficulties which are far beyond our combined powers and which leave us still so helpless and hopeless if we try to accomplish the task alone. Then there is the field and the need, beyond limit, for evangeli-

like to see our children in a field of mission, and in the
same way to see them, on any one day, in a field of mission. We
are not the only people to be going to the same place in it, the part
of our church is identical. And so to be in the field of religious
education is an important part of every religion in family religious
training. There is a great deal to be done in the field of religious
education. Our fathers and their nobly maintaining their principle of ecclesiastical
education. It was in just such a school that many of us were brought
up. For our part must in the right equivalent to it in our new conditions.
Further we have a common apologetic testimony to offer to a common national
contribution to the world with respect to the central Christian virtues. We
hold them in a similar one in our similar grounds. Our motto of statement and
our presentation of the message of our faith are so similar that no one without
would object any thing, good or bad. And, once set, we stand on the
the saint name of the simple, reverent worship of our fathers. If you think
that we need you more than you need us, will not do. Our problems and tasks
are one and they call for united thought and prayer and action.

Lately we have a common vision, a common influence in outlook and
duty. I have referred to the time between 1880 and 1885 when we had a single
foreign mission agency. When that was given up and we developed our separate
missions we nevertheless set up common standards on the foreign field. In Japan,
China, India - wherever our missions have been - and our influence has been gathered
into united churches. In the case of the United States we have a common vision, our motto
and the reformed Church in the United States acting in concert on organization.
And, as you know, our Board of Foreign Missions has been the first to join
with the Board of the other Protestant and Reformed Churches in our United
Board of Foreign Missions in which no one of our Churches has a veto for its propo-

... of financial contribution could have a preponderance of administrative control. An your missionary leaders have been ours, Talar, Sauter, Chamberlain, Miller, Verbeck and James Canine and the Deacons, Parsons and some who have been our active promoters, and our brothers of blood. When I look to the Secretaryship of our Board, 48 years ago, Mr. Allyn Woodbury of Concord, N.H., and his fellow-worker Mr. Henry W. Cook of Boston and the other men on our Board, missionaries of our Board in Paris and all the past of confidence and understanding of those days is preserved to my heart as an William Chamberlain. To find the soul together. Here we are not divided. The Spirit is leading you with us in our desire to express our unity in one body of common counsel and action!

My friends the overture which I bring to you is wholly practical and sincere. It is to be sure part of a broad vision that all our Presbyterian and Reformed Churches should unite but do it slowly and gradually. We are prepared to go forward with all or with you, if others are not ready. In the past we have made mistakes by allowing the possibility of union of two or more of our churches to be blocked awaiting the day of some far comprehensive agreement. Let us not make that mistake now. And do not allow the Christian response of our General Assembly to the Christian inquiry of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church to deter us from such a resolution as we have proposed for our two Churches. We will consider fully together all proposals of any other union of Evangelical Churches and we will seek together to go to the heart of the matter, in view of the needs of the world and to work for the Church in the wilderness.

I have spoken of the will of the past and the will of the present and its needs which to they be sure but do not seem to be sure in the line to be will of Christ. A year ago I was with the young of men and women from all over the world who met in the International Missionary Council in Jerusalem. On Thursday night, before Good Friday, we went out together in the mountains and had a supper under the olive trees. I shall in the valley of Jericho and in the clouds

... and ... of ... Full moon shining full ...
... another ... look ... group
... the ... from
... why should we
... in our ... Church, ...
... in the ... of ...
... all ... in truth. ...
... unity ...
... can find the ...
... sought for by our ... and ... by our ...

REPORT OF
FACT FINDING COMMISSION ON CHRISTIAN UNION
of the
GENERAL SYNOD
of the
REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA

Holland, Michigan - 1929.

REPORT OF
FACT FINDING COMMISSION ON CHRISTIAN UNION
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GENERAL SYNOD
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REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA
convened in
HOPE CHURCH - HOLLAND, MICHIGAN
June 6, 1929.

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INTRODUCTION

The General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, meeting in New York City in 1928, felt that the time had arrived for special consideration of the problem of Church Union. Much discussion has prevailed for the past few years as to the advantages and disadvantages of Church Union, and rumors of overtures being presented from one denomination to another have been circulated constantly.

There was one other fact of supreme importance which the church felt - the persistence of this idea for Union. Since men witnessed the divisions and the separations in the Church, one idea has constantly been foremost in their minds - the necessity for welding together these various sections. As a mariner takes his reckoning from a distant star, plots his course, and steers his ship into the harbor marked "Home", so beginning with the reformers this idea of Union has been as a star from which Church lovers have plotted their course and steered their lives, hoping to guide the Churches into more efficient service within the port marked "The Kingdom". The endurance, the persistence, the living quality of this idea demanded thought and diligent study. Conscious of these various factors, our Church desired to be enlightened and thus the Fact Finding Commission was appointed.

The Commission, working as sub-committees, has studied a wide field. Much valuable data has been collected as a result of this investigation and many able papers written. We would that this material might be published in detail, but because of the volume of the material gathered this is an impossibility. This booklet must serve as a summary.

After many conferences the problem was analyzed into the following divisions:

- I - The Advantages and Disadvantages of Union for our Church
- II - Church Movements toward Organic Union in General

III - History of our Relations with the Reformed Church
in the United States and the Present Status

IV - History of our Relations with the Presbyterian Church
in the United States of America and the Present
Status

V - Conclusions

We have heeded Dr. Blekking's advice of carefully guarding against unhealthy agitation. We have kept counsel with ourselves. We have confined ourselves to concrete situations. We have endeavored to bury our own personal opinions and ^{to} bring to light only facts.

We submit this report to you. We believe we have worked diligently, and we trust "the possibilities" we have found will be accepted as being truly factual and pertinent to the present situation of our denomination. We do ask for your careful study.

CHAPTER I

1 - The Advantages and Disadvantages of Union
for our Church.

No sooner were we appointed as a Commission than we were impressed by the fact that there are two definite trends of thought throughout our constituency.

On the one hand there are those who believe we can more efficiently contribute to the advancement of The Kingdom by remaining as we are - an independent denomination preserving its historical traditions and contributions for the life of today. These folks are termed the ~~objectors to Church Union~~ ^{advocates of present status}.

On the other hand there are those who believe we can more fully advance The Kingdom by combining our efforts with other denominations. These folks are termed the advocates of Church Union.

These two trends of thought must be recognized and their suggestions heeded. A summary of their respective positions is here presented.

Reason for Remaining as We Are.
1st Objection

Those who are in favor of remaining as we are maintain that our Church is characterized by an unusual family spirit which might be weakened or destroyed in a union with other bodies. As we are, we are efficient and individuals have a sense of contributing to the enterprise of our Church.

Answer

The advocates for Church Union maintain that this family spirit would be preserved. Family Spirit is not a treasure preserved by small groups - family spirit does not depend on size. For example, it was asked recently of Dr. Robert E. Speer if the family spirit was evident in the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., a denomination twelve times larger than ours. He answered: "Unquestionably yes". He said that the Presbyterian Church is just beginning to realize its power and its resources, signifying that the family spirit is there growing.

The advocates of Church Union claim that if we were united with a like-minded body our esprit de corps would not suffer.

Reason for Remaining as We Are.
2nd Objection

A merger with another denomination ranking below us in per capita giving would lower our mark. That we now rank high in per capita giving is apparent from the following statistics quoted from the United Stewardship Council Statistics for 1928:

| | |
|-------------------------|---------|
| For All Purposes | |
| 1 - Moravian, North | \$72.53 |
| 2 - Presbyterian U.S.A. | 39.11 |
| 3 - Reformed in America | 38.52 |

| | |
|-------------------------------|---------|
| For Congregational Expenses | |
| 1 - Moravian, North | \$48.77 |
| 2 - Baptist, Ontario & Quebec | 28.64 |
| 3 - Reformed in America | 26.34 |

| | |
|---------------------------------|---------|
| For Denominational Benevolences | |
| 1 - Moravian, North | \$12.88 |
| 2 - Presbyterian U.S. (South) | 12.40 |
| 3 - United Presbyterian | 9.36 |
| 4 - Reformed in America | 8.58 |

Two - Third Places
 One - Fourth Place

Answer

Figure as you will, our Benevolent Funds for several years past have been flowing like the Hudson River, back and forth at a "dead level". The little old Reformed Church has done well among all the churches of America. Our present embarrassment is this - our home-base is too small to keep up the pace. If we have measurably come to the limit of our giving-resources what is to be done about it? Cut and retrench until we drive our missionaries to an early grave, or look around for a larger home-base?

Every year our Foreign Board, because of lack of funds, reports its inability to send young men and women who desire to go to foreign fields. The advocates of Church Union quote the words of Dr. Speer who said not long ago that the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. holds the greatest block of undeveloped resources in the United States. A union with such a denomination would enlarge our home-base, would make available greater funds, and would make possible the

enlarging of our missionary program. This enlarged vision would be an impetus to increase even our per capita giving.

Reason for Remaining as we are
3rd ~~Objection~~

Our Doctrinal Standards are definite and explicit and our Liturgy is largely optional. This definiteness of theology and this moderate use of liturgy, it is felt, lends a distinctive dignity to our Church which would be jeopardized by any merging with others. It is often said that we have a true psychological reason for existence. Our theology is so well systematized and our worship has proved such a happy medium between the formal and the easy-going, that we should preserve it intact.

Answer

How many of our Church members know that in 1839 our General Synod endorsed the Westminster Catechism and that in 1870 the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. in three articles definitely approved the Heidelberg Catechism. If we united with the Presbyterians they would accept our Standards as well as our 300 years of history as the roots and trunk of their own. Theologically we are one. Liturgically an outsider could see no difference. Psychologically we address ourselves to the same elements in the community. The very logic which is the proud boast of our theological interest impells to union and not against it.

Reason for Remaining as we are
4th ~~Objection~~

Another objection to Church Union is the possibility of entanglements over property rights and endowments. Our charters, endowments and deeds run back for many years and accordingly this danger would be peculiarly real.

Answer

So far as the transfer of titles, deeds, etc., we can but quote from the address of Dr. Wm. V. C. Mabon, before the Conference on Union between our Church and the Reformed Church in the U. S., at Philadelphia, April 4, 1888:

"Whatever questions may be thought to exist on the property side may be referred to the wise counsel of the Elders who are 'learned in the law'.

If the objectors have in mind the possibility of the minority keeping the property, it is true that examples of such cases can be found. On the other hand the best lawyers now maintain that the courts are becoming more friendly toward the majority. In the case of the Union of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. and the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in 1905, the Courts sustained the Union and the majority took the property, except in specific instances where congregational votes determined the disposal of local houses of worship and lands. (See The Presbyterian Digest, 1922, Vol. 1, pp. 697-706) These cases were recognized as establishing important precedents and were accordingly very carefully adjudicated.

All of such objections, however, are anticipating a situation which no one in our Church desires - certainly not the commission, for at its full meeting, held in New York City on February 20, 1929, the following resolution was adopted:

"No decisive steps shall be taken toward Union without substantial unanimity of all sections of our Church."

We hold that Church Union on any other principle would be divisive rather than constructive.

Reason for Remaining as We Are
5th objection

If we were to unite with another body much larger than ours some feel we would resign our goodly heritage to complete absorption. Have we a moral right to do this?

Answer

Even if this were true it must be remembered that long ago our Master laid down the principle that the one way to save one's life is by losing it. Signs multiply on every side that plenty of other mergers will follow and thus all danger of absorption in particular cases will be cancelled out. Probably it is nearer the

truth to believe that no denomination can possibly hold its status quo for many more years. All are caught in a great modern flux and larger absorptions will speedily transcend all lesser absorptions. Surely our contribution will affect the entire mixture and the Reformed Church will live on and on.

6th Objection *Reason for Remaining as we are.*

Some believe that Spiritual Unity meets every requirement of our Lord's prayer for unity. They deprecate the reliance placed upon mere numbers, and they feel that the different denominations are divisions in the one catholic army of Christ.

Answer

Spiritual Unity is the basic idea involved, that is, it is the foundation, but Organic Unity is the structure that is to be visible to all beholders. Our Lord Himself prays "that all may be one", and in that same petition, "that the world may believe that the Father sent me". Beholders nowadays see enough hard facts to prove divisions, and if we are limited to good fellowship and mutual admiration within the charmed circle we will fail to make any impression at all. Organic Union is the ultimate goal of that marvelous prayer of our Lord, when we consider it in all its rounded fullness. As Dr. Daniel A. Poling has said:

"In Christ spiritual unity and ^{schisms} physical divisions are contradictory. Christians cannot be one and yet apart. Schisms are a stumbling block to men."

Nothing short of Organic Union will meet the schisms of our time.

In addition to meeting these objections the exponents of Union present the following positive reasons for organic mergers:

- 1 - Foreign Missions would gain by Church Union.

Church Union would greatly accelerate the work of Foreign Missions. The statement adopted by the International Missionary Council, at Jerusalem, last spring, concludes as follows:

"As together, Christians of all lands, we have surveyed the world and the needs of men, we are convinced of the urgent necessity for a great increase in the Christian forces in all countries, and for a still further measure of cooperation between the churches of all nations in more speedily laying the claim of Christ upon all the unoccupied areas of the world and of human life."

President J. Ross Stevenson, of Princeton Seminary, speaking before the

Commission expressed it thus:

"We need to get it on our minds and hearts that we are not catching up with the work our Lord has instituted, and while to some Church Union may seem incidental, to those who have it on their minds and hearts to get the work of the Lord done, Church Union is vitally necessary."

Insert (over)

2 - Church Union would solve many problems of over-churched communities.

Rev. M. Eugene Flipse, a member of the Commission, writes:

"One of the most ridiculous things in American religious life is the average Main Street with its four, five, six or more churches, all struggling for existence, and very often feeding on sheep stolen from other folds."

Another member of the Commission, the Rev. Robert W. Searle, has made the following survey of an historic Dutch center, the City of Albany, N. Y. It is of a challenging nature.

"Albany is in a sense the eldest community of the Reformed Church in America. Before Manhattan Island was the scene of any family life, as early as the year 1624, a settlement was made at Albany. For two years, until the threat of the Indians drove the families down the river, the Dutch settlement in America was at Fort Orange. Here it was that Krol officiated as Comforter of the Sick, a part of which duty was the conducting of the Sabbath Service. From that time until the year 1680 the Dutch Reformed Church was the only Church in the whole Community. In 1680 the Lutheran Church was established. We pass on rapidly. In the year 1793 a religious census of Albany reveals the following proportionate membership; Dutch Reformed 40%; Presbyterian 30%; Episcopal 20%; Lutheran 10%. Today the Protestant membership in this city of 130,000 is as follows:

| | | |
|--------------|------------|--------------|
| Presbyterian | 6 Churches | 4300 Members |
| Lutheran | 8 " | 4300 " |
| Episcopal | 7 " | 3500 " |
| Methodist | 6 " | 3300 " |
| Baptist | 4 " | 2500 " |
| Reformed | 6 " | 2300 " |

Dr. John A. Dytch, Central Reformed Church, Grand Rapids Mich.

writes:

"The business of the Christian Church is not to send missionaries to heathen Peoples to make them Reformed or Presbyterian or any other denominational type, but to lead them into fellowship with Christ."

Committee expresses its appreciation for the interest and cooperation of the members of the church in the work of the past year, and for the financial support of the church.

Not only do we have our own work to do, but we have the work of the world to do. We are called to be witnesses to the world, and to be agents of reconciliation between God and man.

Very truly yours,

3 - Church Board of Christian Education

Rev. J. J. ... a member of the congregation,

"One of the most ridiculous things in the average man's mind is the idea that the church is a mere organization, a mere structure of wood and stone, and that it is the duty of the church to build up a great and imposing edifice."

Member of the congregation, the church is not a mere organization, but a living organism.

The following survey of the church in the city of Grand Rapids, Michigan, is of a preliminary nature.

Already in a sense the church is a living organism, and it is the duty of the church to build up a great and imposing edifice. The church is not a mere organization, but a living organism, and it is the duty of the church to build up a great and imposing edifice.

| Year | Members | Worshipers | Offerings |
|------|---------|------------|-----------|
| 1920 | 100 | 150 | \$1000 |
| 1921 | 110 | 160 | \$1100 |
| 1922 | 120 | 170 | \$1200 |
| 1923 | 130 | 180 | \$1300 |
| 1924 | 140 | 190 | \$1400 |
| 1925 | 150 | 200 | \$1500 |

No figures of Roman Catholic membership can be obtained but an estimate would place them at about 20,000 and the Jewish Synagogues at about 5,000. The Roman Church has a splendidly organized parish system covering the whole city and anticipating the growth of the city for years to come. A complete system of parochial schools is well maintained in addition to the usual charitable institutions of this Church. At the present time the amount of building under actual construction by the Roman Church in Albany involves some three or four millions of dollars.

The map of the city reveals the sad story of a divided Protestantism. The Protestant Churches are in great clusters. And there are great gaps. The city is both terribly overchurched and in some parts pathetically underchurched. There are fourteen Protestant Churches within a quarter of a mile of the intersection of State and Lark Streets. The result has been and is that in spite of all attempts at spiritual unity there exists and must exist to a marked degree a competitive element between the Churches. The result is a misdirection of endeavor and aim and a sinful waste of resources.

The history of the Protestantism of Albany reveals the fact in no uncertain manner that each Church has been a law unto itself. When through these environmental changes that are so well known in our older cities a Church's constituency has ~~been~~ ^{moved} away from it, instead of remaining and adapting itself to its new opportunities, it has chosen for itself what its leaders have believed to be the very best location and has then moved. It has made no difference whether other churches were already on the field. As a consequence nearly every church in the city is still trying to maintain itself on the basis of the old family church. A by-product of this is the neglect of the lower part of the city. It is said that one-fourth of the population of Albany live in this section. It has one institutional church, the Trinity Episcopal. That church is there simply because of the personality of its Rector who is the most beloved man in the city. Years ago the Episcopalians were ready to let it die, but he, seeing the possibilities for service in the community, secured permission to take hold of the situation, built up his own Board of Directors, raised his own funds, and today, after years of loving service, is performing probably the most genuine Christian work in the whole city. There are other Protestant Churches in this neighborhood. Three Lutheran, one Reformed, and one Methodist. They are in it but not of it. They are old churches, some German speaking as for instance our Reformed Church, but they minister to the neighborhood not at all. Then there is a City Mission - but why must they be Missions when they minister to the under-privileged and churches when they minister to the more well-to-do classes? There is room for the operation of a fine piece of work on a large scale by the Presbyterian-Reformed Church, but it must be supported for years by the Churches of the city at large. Again, the city has grown toward the west by leaps and bounds. In the last five years the line has moved in that direction for more than a mile. It is a home-owning community, the finest

residential section of the city. But there is no church there and so far as I can determine none anticipated save in the most vague way as individuals see the necessity of this compelling opportunity.

This divided Protestantism is singularly and notably weak when it comes to influencing social conditions. In union there is strength. In the present state of things with the clustering of Churches and the resultant overchurched there are in the whole city scarcely three churches which have a residue of energy left after taking care of the necessities of their own organization. In the preparation of this paper and in my study of the Protestantism of Albany it has been borne in on me with compelling force that the situation is such in nearly every Church as to compel the Churches to live upon a low plane. The Kingdom is largely lost sight of in the exigencies of the Church. Where there is a struggle renewed annually and continued through the year to meet a minimum budget, where there is the annual test of statistics such as Church membership and its accessions these things naturally absorb the best energy, and in most cases, the whole energy of the individual churches.

By any test, the Presbyterian Church is the leading Church in the city. It has but one struggling Church. The other five with one exception are thriving and resourceful. On the other hand of the six denominations in Albany with more than one Church, the Reformed Church is the weakest in spite of its historic advantages. At the present moment only one of the six Reformed Churches can look forward to the future with assurance, that is, the Third Church. It has struggled to reach this point. As for the others: The First Church is faced with as large an opportunity as has ever been before it. It is being left alone in the business heart of the city and because of its location and tradition can readily become what a Baptist minister has called "the Protestant Cathedral" of the city. But as yet there is not the faith or the determination to lay hold upon this opportunity. The Madison Ave. Church has been left in a backwash of population movement. It must adapt itself to a rooming house and foreign neighborhood or move or die. Within the past two months its official Boards have unanimously refused to consider the proposition of adaptation. The Third Church has already been mentioned. The Fourth Church is a German language Church. It is located in the lower part of the city. Its policy restricts it to a limited constituency, it is now considering a move, but wherever it goes it must widen its policy or remain almost negligible, particularly in these days of restricted immigration. The Fifth Church is a Holland speaking Church. It is unable to keep a minister beyond three or four years because of the impossibility of making any appeal, either to its neighborhood or to the city at large. In addition to this it is in the heart of the most overchurched section of the city and within a few blocks of the Madison Avenue Church. The Sixth Church is overshadowed by the strong West End Presbyterian Church. It was a venture in Church extension but unfortunately it was not strategically placed and its appeal is limited.

It may be asked as to what advantage would accrue from the union of the Presbyterian and Reformed Denominations. That would depend, of course, to a large extent on the manner in which the Albany churches met this change of status. But there are certain effects which would be nearly automatic, such, for instance, as the lifting up of a Protestant Church of so much influence and prestige that it could exert a very great influence upon social questions within the city. But beyond these automatic effects it must lead to the union of two Churches, a union out of which would come a strong downtown Church; to the abandoning of one or two properties where there is neither the need or the opportunity for service; to the erection of two new plants, the one in a residential neighborhood and the other in an under-privileged neighborhood. The resources of the combined denomination would be more than ample. It would form a center around which Albany Protestantism could and would rally. The needs of the various sections would be met. The hearts of all would be strengthened and many who have become indifferent because either consciously or unconsciously they have felt that the Church was too much in the foreground and the Kingdom too little, would be turned toward the work of the Christ.

Unless the Reformed Church takes this step, and this is not the opinion of the writer alone but an opinion in which at least four of the other five ministers concur, the days of the Reformed Church in the city of Albany are numbered. ~~The time has come when even the name has lost its significance. The multitudes who are coming in to the city do not connect the word "reformed" with the great Protestant Reformation but think of it rather as some peculiar split from off some other denomination."~~

3 - Church Union would bring about economy in overhead expenses.

Quoting from "The United Presbyterian", February 26, 1929:

"It would seem that the economic folly of maintaining so many different ecclesiastical establishments which are doing the same kind of work, using the same methods, operating the same fields, has particularly impressed the business men of the various communions. They are inquiring why these various churches, which have no doctrinal difference to separate them, do not get together, put their missionary enterprises under one board, operate their activities from one center with one set of officers for the whole."

Dr. Frederick Knubel, President of the United Lutheran Church, in a recent interview stated that the result of the ten years of the United Lutheran Church clearly showed that mergers make for economy when one counts not merely for finances, but in terms of work done.

Prof. George W. Richards, D.D., in his article "Explaining the Plan of Union" writes:

"I cull the following facts from a report made by the United Church of Canada, June, 1925: 410 congregations have been consolidated into 205 strong and self-supporting charges. The overhead expense for conducting these churches has been halved. The ministers now feel that they have a man's job. In most cases churches that were dependent upon aid from the Home Mission Board are now able to support themselves. In one town, the Home Boards supported two ministers, appropriating annually from \$700 to \$1200. Now the two churches have one minister and are self-supporting. In a single Presbytery, \$12,500 a year was saved for the Home Mission Board by consolidating congregations, in each instance at the request of the congregations themselves. Before the union, 278 charges received aid; each of these charges, since the union, has become self-supporting. For this reason the Board of Home Missions has been able to extend its work into unoccupied territory in Canada and to open 149 new churches with 600 preaching places, where hitherto a religious service was never held."

~~4 - Church Union is a challenge - denominationalism has lost its appeal.~~

~~The argument heard today with increasing insistence is that schisms are maintained for which all adequate reasons have disappeared. Matters of Faith must always be fundamental and central and nothing can ever take their place, but people today are not interested in creedal distinctions to the same extent that they are interested in Christianity as a way of life.~~

~~As Arthur J. Gossip, of Edinburg, says in his recent book: "The Hero in Thy Soul":~~

~~"In those old days, when a man gave himself to God, he was likely to do it by means of a formal covenant, with its provisions all set down at length with a legal precision, whereas today he would slip his hand quietly into Christ's, and say little about it."~~

~~More and more the world is coming to understand the issues of life and death and more and more the world is looking to the Church to point the way to righteousness and peace. The emphasis just now seems to be upon "doing the will" to know the doctrine. On this score creedal differences as such are fast becoming ridiculously irrelevant. The most prominent element in the doctrinal basis of most~~

~~of the mergers now going on is Christianity as a way of life. Creedal denominationalism has lost its meaning.~~

5 - A New Name would challenge the Community.

There are some who go so far as to claim that the name "Reformed" is a detriment. Our name is not nationally well-known, and European history is not vital enough to the average American citizen to make it so. While it is undoubtedly true that the name Reformed is most truly descriptive of all protestant designations, yet it is just as undoubtedly true that the best name does not always win out. Too many elements enter in. We need but analyze the constituency of some of our Eastern Churches to appreciate that we are recruiting our members from dher denominations. Dr. Frank Seeley has gathered the following data:

"In attempting to arrive at some definite conclusions which will give some form and lend some color to the problem of organic union between certain Protestant Denomination, some light may be thrown on the problem by ascertaining the religious background of individual churches. How far does the present constituency of the Reformed Church in America represent anything like historic denominational continuity? Is there a peculiar denominational loyalty based upon religious tradition? Has the Reformed Church in America, for instance, such essentially unique historical characteristics that it represents a religious effort dependant for its success upon the preservation of traditional features of race and creed?

The answer to these questions must be shaped by the fact of the present constituency of our Churches. While no effort has been made to ascertain the Denominational background of our ministers, it would be exceedingly interesting and illuminating to learn how many of our leaders in the ministry were reared and trained in other denominations. From the President of General Synod, to many of the Officers and members of our Church Boards, we would find a very considerable number of our leading ministers who came to us from sister denominations, trained in other seminaries, Auburn, Princeton, Hartford, Union. If we leave out of consideration the Western Branch of our Church, there is no large representation of Reformed Church historic background among our clergymen.

But effort has been made to ascertain the Denominational complexion of the members of our Churches in the East. Inquiry has been made of approximately twenty pastors of Churches, representing strategic centers, to ascertain this information. Replies have been received from thirteen pastors giving the following information:

The letter of Dr. Fred Berg, of the Flatbush Church in Brooklyn, I shall quote in full: 'It hardly seems to me that results would justify the enormous amount of research necessary to the giving a tabulated reply to your inquiry concerning the ecclesiastical history of the membership of this church. I can, however, say that while there is still a good nucleus of members born to or in the Reformed Church, the large majority are so by adoption. Naturally those we receive by confession are the children and young people of the congregation; ~~are~~ ^{are}, with rare exceptions, from a dozen different denominations not Reformed. I wish the "Fact Finding Commission" success but confess I do not see just what is the logic of these particular facts unless the Synod is going to circularize its Dutch families with the request to be 'fruitful and multiply'."

Dr. Ross, of the First Reformed Church of Nyack, writes: 'Only a very small proportion of the members of our Church were reared in the Reformed Church. The vast majority of those received by letter are from other denominations. I do not think our people would be interested in a union with the Reformed Church in the U. S. alone; we would like to be part of the whole movement for Church Unity, but do not think it would be greatly advanced by a union with this one denomination.'

Dr. Mackenzie of Flushing, L. I., says that less than 25% of the membership of the Church was reared in the Reformed Church. More than two-thirds of letters received come from other denominations.

Dr. Meengs, of the Second Reformed Church of Schoenectady writes that 'one-half of our membership today is composed of people who have been connected with the Reformed Church. Nine out of ten who unite with us today are from other denominations.'

Dr. Drumm of the North Reformed Church of Newark, N. J., reports: 'Our Church is really a Scotch Presbyterian Church under the Dutch Reformed flag. We have very few Dutch families and those coming to us by letter are from other churches - chiefly Scotch Presbyterian. In a word, if all the Scotch people were removed we would have to close up.'

Mr. Scholten, of the First Reformed Church of Tarrytown, N. Y., writes: 'Of a total of 311 members 167 were reared in the Reformed Church in America and 144 in other denominations. During my entire pastorate I have received more than twice as many members by letter from other denominations than from our own.'

Mr. Vruwink of the Madison Ave. Reformed Church, Albany, N.Y., reports that at the last Communion 25 people were received by letter, of which number only 8 came from the Reformed Church, while only one-fourth of all received came from our own Church.'

Mr. Deane Edwards, of the Bronxville Church, writes that 'only 10% of his constituency has a Reformed Church training and background'.

Dr. Broek, of Plainfield, N. J., says: '50% of membership comes from other denominations'.

Dr. Broek, of Mt. Vernon, reports: 'approximately one-tenth of membership reared in the Reformed Church'.

Dr. Watson, of Jamaica, L. I., reports 75% of Church membership of Dutch history and descent, though the past year all persons received by letter came from other Churches.

Dr. Caton, of First Reformed Church of Union City, N. J., writes that 'the community is about 50% foreign, Catholic Church strong, large German settlement; 187 of present membership brought letters from other churches; Reformed Church background not strong', and ends his letter with these words: 'Our note is the universality of the Christian rule of life.'

Mr. Flipse, of Douglaston, L. I., reports 10% of membership reared in the Reformed Church; those received by letter coming from over 20 other denominations.

Rev. Andrew Meyer, of Brooklyn, reports 80% of his membership of German parentage and no especial emphasis upon denominational background.

These facts and figures furnish us with some exceedingly interesting information. We are no longer a people 'sui generis' with anything approximating a common religious denominational background. It is quite evident that the laity is concerned first of all with loyalty to a Person rather than an Institution. They work together, pray together, give and sacrifice together, with their hearts centered upon the establishing of Christ's Kingdom, seeking that Denominational fellowship which furnishes them with the greatest inspiration for the largest service, in the enthronement of a World Redeemer in the Rome, the Community, the Nation, and the World."

⁵
 5 - Church Union is the Will of God.

There are many of our people who after serious thought, long deliberation, and prayer have decided that the movement for Church Union is the Will of God.

The very persistence of this idea in the mind of men is a challenging fact. In 1538 (February 21st) John Calvin, in a letter to Henry Bullinger, expresses his desire for union of the Reformed Churches:

"Oh, if a pure and sincere accommodation could be agreed upon at length among us."

This was a cherished hope of Calvin's during his life, for fifteen years later, April 1552, writing to Archbishop Thomas Cramer, the same longing is expressed:

"This ... thing also is to be ranked among the chief evils of our time, viz., that the Churches are so divided ... the members of the Church being severed, the body lies bleeding. So much does this concern me, that, could I be of any service, I would not grudge to cross even ten seas, if need were, on account of it ... I think it right for me, at whatever cost of toil and trouble, to seek to obtain this object.

Thomas Cramer, Archbishop of Canterbury and Primate of England, to whom the above letter was written, took an important part in the Reformation of his country during the reigns of Henry VIII and Edward VI. He laboured assiduously with the Reformers of the Continent, who highly esteemed his learning and honored his character, to establish a union between Churches. He was revered by Calvin, as their correspondence reveals. Cramer diagnosed the divisions of the Church in a letter to Calvin:

"It cannot escape your prudence how exceedingly the Church of God has been injured by discensions."

In this booklet it is impossible to quote all of the church fathers in whom this idea prevailed. In herds of God fearing men we find it, a prompting thought driving them to action. In many it burned as a consuming fire. Among such is to be numbered G. W. Leibnitz (1646-1716). His biographer writes:

"His (Leibnitz) efforts for Reunion covering over half a century, cannot be equalled in the whole history of religious endeavors ... the Churches felt the burning need of reunion."

Leibnitz was a philosopher, a mathematician, with Newton invented Differential Calculus, and was regarded by many as stern, cold, having no deep religious sense. This vision of union kindled within him a burning fire and he was the leader of thinkers and men of this day toward this goal. The light of this idea revealed the path, for "his letters burn with a personal enthusiasm, as though religion was his most priceless possession". He challenged the Church with these words:

"It is not enough to say that it is the work of the Holy Spirit to touch men's hearts, His influence must be won by a sincere desire to forward the peace of the Church ... those who are not doing this are in real error and they alone are guilty of schism."

Richard Baxter writes:

"An army is stronger than a man ... Union is the church's strength, and what good they may pretend, dividers are certainly the weakeners and destroyers of the church ... Dividing is wounding and uniting is the closing of the wound."

In 1794 the Rev. Wm. Linn, D.D., one of the ministers of the Reformed

Dutch Church in New York, stated in a sermon:

"To strive about the peculiarities of denominations, is bigotry not orthodoxy, it is party spirit and not holy zeal."

One could continue quoting from the Church fathers, but space will not permit. However, space must be made for the following quotation from the Minutes of the Classis of New York, April 21, 1925:

"WHEREAS the Reformed Church in America and the Reformed Church in the United States have a similar religious ancestry and a common heritage in the doctrinal symbol, the Heidelberg Catechism, and in the use of the terms "Classis" and "Synod" and have in recent years been brought into unusually friendly intercourse through publication and other activities: AND WHEREAS there are many who believe that the interests of the Kingdom would be advanced by encouraging a closer understanding between these related denominations, with the prospect of ultimate union; therefore be it RESOLVED that the Classis of New York overtures General Synod to direct the Committee on Closer Relations with Other Denominations to arrange for a conference on the subject of union between these two denominations, said conference to be held during the coming ecclesiastical year; and be it further RESOLVED that a copy of this action be sent to Synod's Committee on Closer Relations in advance of the coming session of the General Synod for its consideration, and for appropriate action."

The above action is in itself comprehensible and complete, but it has further significance because of its origin. At a meeting of the ministerial staff of the Collegiate Church, which meeting was held in the West End Collegiate Church,

in March 1926, Dr. David James Burrell, then senior minister of the Collegiate Church, moved that the ministers recommended to the Consistory of the Collegiate Church or to the Classis of New York the action indicated above.

This was the last occasion on which Dr. Burrell appeared formally with his associates. It was the last "matter of business" with which he was able to concern himself. May we not assume that Church Union represented the final longing of his heart?

From the persistence of this idea for Church Union there are those conscientious folks who feel that the idea reveals a Creative Intelligence - God - working through the minds of men to bring on this earth His Will. If this idea had flourished only occasionally its divine source might be questioned. However, its persistence, its driving force, the character of the men in whom it has been a passion - spiritual geniuses in tune with the infinite - stamp it as an idea emanating from God, and folks coming to this conclusion believe it to be the Will of God.

CHAPTER II

- 1 - Church Movements toward Organic Union in General
 - a - Landscape View of Church Union Movement
in North America
 - b - Unions consummated since 1900
 - c - Unions Proposed

The Commission feels that our Church desires to be enlightened on the Union movements which have been consummated and which are now being proposed. It is a rather startling fact that adding together the totals of Church memberships in communions already united and in communions definitely thinking about merging, and excluding duplication, the total is 17,316,789. In North America there are 75,000,000 protestant church members, ^{and adherents} according to the World Almanac of 1929, and 23 per cent of them are looking toward the merging of their forces into one united army. They are moving out into the light of the new day.

Following is a landscape view of the Church Union Movement in North America.

a - Landscape View of Church Union Movement in North America.

Unions Consummated since 1900 - 5

| | <u>Membership</u> |
|--|----------------------|
| 1 - 1905 - Presbyterian Church U. S. A. Cumberland Presbyterian | 1,158,682 145,662 |
| | <u>1,304,324</u> |
| Continuing Cumberland Church | 50,359 |
| " " in 1926 | 67,938 |
| 2 - 1917 - Three Norwegian Lutheran Synods Merged - Total membership then | 445,000 |
| 3 - 1918 - United Lutheran Church - now In 10 years an increase of | 1,214,340 |
| members - 59% | |
| missions - 131% | |
| Congregational Exp. - 180% | |
| 4 - 1920 - Presbyterian Church U.S. A. Welsh Presbyterian Church | 1,637,105 2,500 |
| 5 - 1925 - United Church of Canada, 1927 Continuing Presby. Church | 629,549 163,000 |

Unions Proposed - 8

| | <u>Membership</u> | |
|--|-------------------------------------|---|
| 1 - Congregational Church Christian Church | 928,558 114,136 | Expected in Oct. 1929 |
| | <u>1,042,694</u> | |
| 2 - Congregational Church Universalist Church | 928,558 54,957 | |
| | <u>983,515</u> | |
| 3 - Disciples in Christ North Baptist | 1,538,692 1,412,879 | |
| | <u>2,951,571</u> | |
| 4 - Methodist Church, North Presbyterian Church, North | 4,080,777 1,894,030 | |
| | <u>5,974,807</u> | |
| 5 - Methodist Church, North Methodist Church, South | 4,080,777 1,638,480 | |
| | <u>5,719,257</u> | |
| 6 - Presbyterian Church, North Methodist Church, North Protestant Episcopal Church | 1,894,030 4,080,777 1,859,086 | |
| | <u>7,833,893</u> | |
| 7 - United Presbyterian Church Presbyterian Church, South | 171,671 451,043 | Now voting |
| | <u>622,714</u> | |
| 8 - Reformed Church U. S. United Brethren in Christ Evangelical Synod N. A. | 361,286 377,436 314,518 | (Our Church Members-153,739 (75 Millions Protestants in N.A. (17 1/3 million on march to Church Union. |
| | <u>1,053,240</u> | |

b - Following is an elaboration of the Church Union Movements Consummated since 1900.

1 - Cumberland Presbyterian Church and Presbyterian Church in U. S. A.

In 1903 the Assemblies of these two churches appointed committees to consider the question of union. A basis of union was formulated and approved by both Assemblies in 1904 and sent down for ratification by the Presbyteries of each body. The Presbyteries voted to approve and in 1905 the Assemblies took action for organic union. It was not until 1907 that this union was fully consummated. In 1907 the two churches for the first time in 97 years held their annual Assembly together. A minority of 50,359 members, or 25% of the whole refused to go into the union and decided to continue the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. It still exists.

2 - The Synod of the Norwegian Lutheran Church, The United Norwegian Lutheran Church, and The Lutheran Free Church.

In 1917 these three churches united to form the Norwegian Lutheran Church.

The Norwegian Lutherans of the United States and Canada celebrated the Quadricentennial of the Protestant Reformation in 1917 by bringing together three organizations into one with a membership of 2500 congregations and 445,000 members.

3 - General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in U.S.A., General Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in N. A., and United Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the South.

In 1918 these three bodies merged taking the name of the United Lutheran Church in America.

This movement originated with a Joint Committee appointed to arrange for a proper general celebration in 1917 of the Quadricentennial of the Protestant Reformation. It was a most notable event in that it restored organic union between churches split apart by the Civil War. In this case there was a dissenting minority that seceded just prior to the merger - the Augustana Synod of Swedish Lutherans, with 204,417 members. The merger started in 1918 with nearly 800,000 members, and in 1926 reported 1,214,340 members, a growth of 50%.

| | <u>1916</u> | <u>1926</u> | <u>Gain</u> |
|-----------|-------------|--------------|-------------|
| Members | 763,596 | 1,214,340 | 59% |
| Missions | \$1,572,272 | \$3,641,043 | 131% |
| Cong. Ex. | \$6,248,008 | \$17,509,300 | 180% |

4 - Welsh Calvinistic Presbyterian Church and Presbyterian Church in U. S. A.

In 1920 the Welsh Calvinistic Presbyterian Church united with the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., bringing 5 synods and 10 presbyteries of about 2500 members. In general these synods preserve their identity by retention of the word "Welsh" as part of their name.

5 - The United Church of Canada.

This union was consummated June 10, 1925, after twenty-five years of negotiations. The Basis of Union is very complete, dealing with doctrine, polity, and general procedure. The Commission has a copy of this basis of union.

Figures available at the time of the merger are in terms of Adherents rather than Adult Communicants.

| | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------|--------------|
| Presbyterian Church in Canada | 1,409,407 | Adherents |
| Methodist Church in Canada | 1,159,458 | " |
| Congregational Church in Canada | 30,730 | " |
| | <u>2,599,595</u> | " |
| Non-concurring Presbyterians | 300,000 | " |
| | <u>2,299,595</u> | " |
| Population of Canada | 9,500,000 | |
| United Church of Canada 1927 | 829,549 | Communicants |
| Non-concurring Pres. Church 1927 | 163,000 | " |
| Mission Budget U. C. C. | \$1,125,000 | |
| Congregational Exp. U. C. C. | \$2,815,655 | |

The structure of the United Church is more like that of the Presbyterian denomination than any other. The names of the governing bodies are: Session, Presbytery, Conference, General Council.

The Methodist system of "placing" ministers in charges was abandoned in favor of the right to "call". However, a "settlement committee" is provided in each conference whose function it is to appoint unlocated ministers to vacant charges where the voluntary system has failed.

c - Following are the proposed Unions.

1 - Proposed Union of the Congregational and Christian Churches.

December 20, 1928, announcement was made that a joint committee appointed by the Commission on Interchurch Relations of the National Council of Congregational Churches and by the Commission on Christian Unity of the General Convention of The Christian Church had agreed upon a Plan of Union after several years of negotiations. A new united national denominational organization, The General Council of the Congregational-Christian Churches, is proposed, and plans are under way to establish it in October 1929. This merger would bring together:

| | <u>Churches</u> | <u>Members</u> |
|----------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Congregational | 5,548 | 928,558 |
| Christian | 950 | 114,136 |
| | <u>5,498</u> | <u>1,042,694</u> |

This union was first proposed by a unanimous vote of the General Christian Convention at its quadrennial meeting in 1926, and was taken up by the National Congregational Council at its biennial meeting in 1927.

The Congregationalists are led by Dr. Frank A. Sanders of Rockport, Mass., and the Christians by Dr. Frank G. Coffin, of Columbus, Ohio.

2 - Proposed Union of the Congregational and Universalist Churches.

The Commission on Interchurch Relations of the National Council of Congregational Churches and the Commission on Cooperation and Church Union of the Universalist General Convention have drawn up A Joint Statement, and this was adopted by the Congregational National Council at Omaha in May 1927 and by the Universalist Convention at Hartford in October 1927.

Actual organic union waits upon the clearing up of several complications.

| | <u>Churches</u> | <u>Members</u> |
|----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Congregational | 5,548 | 928,558 |
| Universalist | 498 | 54,957 |
| | <u>6,046</u> | <u>983,515</u> |

3 - Proposed Union of the Disciples of Christ and the Northern Baptist.

The subject has not passed beyond the stage that diplomats refer to as "conversations", but a report on it will be submitted to the Northern Baptist Convention at Denver, June 1929. The initiative was taken by the Disciples, who asked the Northern Baptists at their Detroit Convention, 1928, to "appoint a committee on unity of program". No special committee was appointed but the matter was referred to the standing Committee on Conference with Other Religious Bodies. Union between these two bodies would be one of the most important, in point of numbers involved, of all the Protestant combinations now bruited.

| | <u>Churches</u> | <u>Members</u> |
|-------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Disciples | 7,648 | 1,538,692 |
| Northern Baptists | 7,611 | 1,412,879 |

4 - Negotiations between the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A.

The General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church which sat through the month of May, 1928, in Kansas City, had a Committee on State of the Church, which considered various memorials asking for church union. This committee unanimously proposed a Commission on Interdenominational Relations, superseding all similar commissions and committees previously appointed. They said: "We recommend that this commission be authorized to make overtures to and receive overtures from like-minded churches, looking toward closer cooperation and union". This report was adopted by an overwhelming vote. It was clearly evident that the Methodists wanted church union, such union to include all churches like-minded.

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., meeting at Tulsa, Oklahoma, May 1928, in turn instructed its Department on Church Cooperation and Union to meet this Methodist Commission. A Joint Meeting was held in the First Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh, January 30, 1929. A sub-committee was appointed to express the sentiments of the body, consisting of Dr. Mudge, Dr. Thompson, Dr. Speer, Bishop Welch, Dr. Allen, and Mr. Cherrington. A statement prepared by

Dr. Speer was worked out, reported back and adopted without opposition or change. It provides for the appointment of two committees, one on Polity and Doctrine, and the other on Administration and Property Interests, with the full recognition that the work of each would be heavy, and should be begun without delay. The Presbyterian members made it clear, however, that these negotiations will not be allowed to stand in the way or hinder in the least any possibility of union within the Presbyterian Family.

| | <u>Churches</u> | <u>Members</u> |
|--------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Methodist | 26,130 | 4,080,777 |
| Presbyterian | 8,947 | 1,694,030 |
| | <u>35,077</u> | <u>5,774,807</u> |

5 - Reunion Negotiations between the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South

The General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, May 1928, in Kansas City, decided that previous failure in this matter is to be disregarded. The two General Conferences have interchanged fraternal delegates, and the two branches have shown a disposition to act together in other matters. Organic Union has been effected in Japan, and reunion has been under serious consideration in this country for more than a decade.

Conferences of the northern branch a few ^{or six} days ago voted overwhelmingly for reunion, and a majority of the conferences in the South favored the step. But the required three-fourths was not obtained in the South. Troublesome as are the obstacles it does not seem in the light of recent developments that they are insuperable.

| | <u>Churches</u> | <u>Members</u> |
|-------|-----------------|------------------|
| North | 26,130 | 4,080,777 |
| South | 17,685 | 1,638,480 |
| | <u>43,815</u> | <u>5,719,257</u> |

6 - Proposed Union of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., the Methodist Episcopal Church, and the Protestant Episcopal Church.

In October 1928 the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, perhaps following the lead of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal

Church, May 1928, made overtures to the Presbyterians and the Methodists for such a three party union.

At the Joint Meeting in Pittsburgh, January 30, 1929, Dr. Joseph A. Vance, of Detroit, suggested that the origination of any plans for this three party union must wait upon the careful and comprehensive study of a joint commission of all three bodies. Such a joint commission has not yet met.

| | <u>Churches</u> | <u>Members</u> |
|--------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Presbyterian | 8,947 | 1,394,030 |
| Methodist | 26,130 | 4,080,777 |
| Episcopal | 7,299 | 1,859,086 |
| | <u>42,376</u> | <u>7,333,893</u> |

7 - Union contemplated between the United Presbyterian Church of North America and the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. (South)

A Plan of Union has been devised and approved by the two General Assemblies in 1923 and sent down to the Presbyteries of both Churches.

Among the United Presbyterians, it is reported, 29 Presbyteries have voted yes and 8 no; 20 Presbyteries have still to act.

Among the Presbyterians South, 30 Presbyteries have voted yes and 8 no; 51 to be heard from.

At present the result is in doubt.

| | <u>Churches</u> | <u>Members</u> |
|----------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| United Presby. N. A. | 901 | 171,571 |
| Presby. U.S., South | 3,469 | 431,043 |
| | <u>4,370</u> | <u>622,614</u> |

8 - Proposed Union of the Reformed Church in the U. S., the United Brethren in Christ, and the Evangelical Synod of W. A.

Details of this proposed union are given in Chapter III.

CHAPTER III

- 1 - History of our Relations with the Reformed Church in the United States
 - a - Recent Contacts with their representatives and Conclusions
- 2 - Present Status of Church Union in the Reformed Church in the United States
 - a - Union Movements
 - b - Study of the Reformed Church in the U. S.
 - c - Study of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ
 - d - Study of the Evangelical Synod of North America

1 - History of our Relations with the Reformed Church in the United States.

General Synod, 1794, opened correspondence with the "Reformed German Church of Pennsylvania". This went on with occasional visits back and forth until 1819 when Dr. John H. Livingston invited them to share in the benefits of the New Brunswick Seminary. This invitation was not answered. Delegates were exchanged until 1843, when committees of conference met in Philadelphia and drew up a plan of cooperation which bore fruit in the Harrisburg Convention of August 1844, which in turn produced a scheme of union.

Our Church hesitated to take any action on account of Professor John W. Mevin's views as teacher of Theology at Mercersburg Seminary. The most dreaded element in this "Mercersburg Theology" was Mevin's emphasis upon the objective operation of the Sacraments, popularly known as Romanizing tendencies. In 1847 the adjourned meeting of the Harrisburg Convention of 1844, now called the Triennial Convention, was to meet. Our Church presented the doctrinal difficulties involved and the Convention voted to dissolve. Thereafter the German General Synod alone carried on the Triennial Convention and still carries it on. In 1853 our Synod suspended correspondence as a protest against Mercersburg Theology. It is interesting to note that the Dutch Church gained the adherence of Dr. Joseph F. Berg because of these doctrinal tendencies of the German Church.

Events moved along indifferently until 1886 when our Synod appointed a committee headed by Dr. W. J. R. Taylor to confer with a similar committee of the German Church. This resulted in the Philadelphia Conference of April 1888. Though this conference was a most thorough-going affair the report to our Synod was progress only. Further informal conference through 1889 resulted in a report to the Synod of 1890 of a Plan of Federal Union. This plan contemplated merging all the Presbyterian-Reformed Churches into an International Reformed Church. The reason that it was Federal Union and not Organic Union seems to be because the Dutch General Synod is invested with greater powers than the German General Synod.

Both Synods adopted the Plan in 1891 and sent it down to the Classes. The German Classes adopted it by a vote of 53 to 2. Our Classes vote at the Synod of 1892 was 24 yes and 9 no. It only remained for the Synod of 1892 to pass a final declarative resolution. Parliamentary war tactics then broke out on the floor of Synod and a thwarting resolution was passed by the barest majority. This is the nearest our two Churches have ever come to merging, and the disappointment, not to say the resentment, of the Reformed Church in the U. S. can easily be understood.

The Synod of 1892 returned the Plan of Federal Union to the Classes for reconsideration and another vote. The Synod of 1893 reported the vote as 16 yes and 18 no. The Classis of Schenectady memorialized the Synod of 1893 "to pronounce upon the constitutionality of the action of the last General Synod in failing to ratify the action of the majority of the Classes in favor of the proposed Federal Union". The Synod decided that such action of the General Synod of 1892 was constitutional.

The final action of the Synod of 1893 was:

"Resolved, that this Synod accepts these reports as evidence that the mind of the church is not in favor of the adoption of the said proposed Articles of Constitution and Federal Union, and that further consideration of the said Articles be indefinitely postponed."

Since then our two churches have been affiliated through the Western Section of the Alliance of Reformed Churches Throughout the World Holding the Presbyterian System, and through The General Council of the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches in America organized in 1907 under the wise and beneficent leadership of Dr. J. Preston Searle. The work of the General Council was taken over by the Alliance in 1926, its Articles of Agreement adding considerably to the powers of the Alliance. Through the Alliance our two churches have worked together in publication, education, and mission work wherever cooperation was possible.

The Members of the Western Section of the Alliance are:

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Presbyterian Church in U. S. A. | Reformed Church in America |
| Presbyterian Church in U.S., South | Reformed Church in the U. S. |
| United Presbyterian Church of N.A. | Associate Reformed Pres. Church |
| United Church of Canada | Reformed Presby. Church (General Synod) |
| Presbyterian Church of Canada | |

a - Recent Contacts with representatives of the Reformed Church in the United States and Conclusions.

At the first meeting of the Commission, Monday, September 17, 1928, the Chairman was instructed to invite Dr. Paul S. Leinbach, of the Reformed Church in the U. S., and Dr. Edgar P. Romig, of our Church, to speak before the next meeting of the Commission. Dr. Leinbach was asked to speak to the subject: "The Status Quo of the Relations between the Reformed Church in the U. S. and the Reformed Church in America"; and Dr. Romig to the subject: "My understanding of the relation between our Church and the Reformed Church in the U. S."

The Commission also instructed the Chairman to invite Dr. J. Ross Stevenson, Chairman of the Department of Church Cooperation and Union of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., to speak before a subsequent meeting of the Commission.

The meeting with Dr. Leinbach and Dr. Romig occurred Monday, October 22, 1928, in the Assembly Room of the Church House, New York City. A general invitation had been sent out to the ministers of our Church near New York to participate in the public part of the meeting. The room was completely filled.

Dr. Leinbach gave the first information we had regarding the overtures to the Reformed Church in the U. S. looking toward union from the United Brethren in Christ and the Evangelical Synod of N. A. Dr. Leinbach said that his people were enthusiastic over the prospect and that there seemed to be a will to unite.

He briefly reviewed the history of our relations and spoke of the inability of the rank and file in the Reformed Church in the U. S. to understand our feeling toward them. Without ignoring any of the facts in the situation, Dr. Leinbach appealed for a new spirit which would raise the present discussion above the

difficulties of yesterday. He suggested that as Dr. George W. Richards, of Lancaster Seminary, was the Chairman of the Committee on Closer Relations in their Church it would be better if we made our contacts through him.

In this connection it is pertinent to note that we had asked Dr. Leinbach because of close personal acquaintance with him while he was pastor in the Reformed Church in America.

There was much discussion after Dr. Leinbach concluded in which many of the ministers and Board of Secretaries participated.

Dr. Romig was then introduced, speaking to the topic: "My understand^{ing} of the relation between our Church and the Reformed Church in the U. S." He said he was familiar with both Churches because his education was received under leaders in the Reformed Church in the U. S. After dealing with the subject from administrative, social, and theological viewpoints in a very scholarly manner, Dr. Romig said that he would like to see Church Union this year, and suggested immediate conferences to this end.

Discussion followed in which there was complete agreement with what Dr. Romig had said.

Heeding the advice of Dr. Leinbach, from this point on the Commission dealt with President George W. Richards, of Lancaster Seminary, the Chairman of the Committee on Closer Union of the Churches of the Reformed Church in the U. S.

In answer to our letter, Dr. Richards replied:

"We are pretty far advanced in negotiations for union with the Evangelical Synod of North America and the United Brethren in Christ. We could not engage in any negotiations until this is finally disposed of. We hope to submit the plan of union to the general bodies next spring ... Because of these negotiations I suggest that it would be better if you as chairman and another member of your Commission whom you might select would meet for an informal conference with me as chairman on our side and Dr. Allen R. Bartholomew, who is a member of the Commission and President of the General Synod. Such a meeting would enable us to talk over the whole situation and act intelligently in the light of common knowledge."

Thus, on Thursday, January 10, 1929, three of our Commission - Mr. Clee, Mr. Bloodgood, and the Chairman - went to Philadelphia and met Dr. Allen R. Bartholomew, President of General Synod and Secretary for Foreign Missions, and Dr. George W. Richards, President of the Theological Seminary at Lancaster, Pa., and Chairman of their Committee on Closer Union of the Churches. It was understood that the conference was informal.

The meeting lasted four hours, including luncheon. Dr. Richards produced a document called "Basis of Union". This was the work of joint commissions of the Reformed Church in the U. S., the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, and The Church of the Evangelical Synod of North America, as noted above. The document has since been revised and published preparatory to being submitted to the three judicatories this year. The united body is to be known as The United Church in America.

Thus it became clear that our brethren of the Reformed Church in the United States, for reasons of their own, are far along on the way to organic union with other bodies distinctly outside of our denominational family. They were good enough to invite us to consider adding the Reformed Church in America to this union movement. They admitted the sharp differences in doctrine and in polity between the Calvinism of the Reformed Church in the U. S., the Lutheranism of the Evangelical Synod of N. A., and the Arminianism of the United Brethren in Christ, but hoped that in these more liberal days these barriers would not prove insuperable. It was informally suggested that we take a copy of the Basis of Union as data for our Commission and that if we agreed with it offer it to this meeting of General Synod with the recommendation that it be sent down to our Classes for vote.

Your Commission, after mature deliberation, voted unanimously to express our very sincere appreciation of this invitation to join with our brethren and to say in return:

"That it be the consensus of this Commission, in view of the negotiations into which the Reformed Church in the U.S. has entered, that there is no action we can take at this time."

All points of difference that so narrowly prevented union with us in 1832 still exist and are in no way ameliorated by this new development. The adding of these two other churches to the problem does not alter the situation sufficiently to warrant reopening the case between us.

The Commission, however, is confident that ultimately there will be union between our respective constituencies and that all this development means is that the way thereto has been altered. Several intermediate stages of union, both on their side and on ours as well, may have to come about first. In the end we may discover that this has been the better logic.

2 - Present Status of Church Union in the Reformed Church in the United States.

a - Union Movements

1925 - The General Conference of the Evangelical Synod of North America of 1925 authorized the appointment of a Committee on Relations with other Churches.

1928 - This Committee was appointed early in 1928, with Dr. H. R. Niebuhr, of Eden Seminary, as Chairman.

Its first meeting was on February 15, 1928, when it decided to make the first approach to the Reformed Church in the U. S.

In April an informal meeting was held at Eden Seminary with Dr. George W. Richards, President of the Seminary of the Reformed Church in the U. S. at Lancaster, Pa., who is Chairman of the Commission on Closer Union of the Churches of that denomination.

Gratified by the cordial response received from this quarter, the Committee of the Evangelical Synod requested a meeting with Dr. Richards' full Commission.

The Committee then learned that Dr. Richards' Commission were just entering upon similar negotiations with representatives of the United Brethren in Christ, who had in turn received overtures of a similar character from representatives of the Evangelical Church.

The evolution of matters then is that Dr. Richards' Commission had discovered that the Evangelical Church and the United Brethren were negotiating and Dr. Richards' Commission joined in as a third party. Then Dr. Niebuhr's Committee in turn discovered these three party negotiations and joined in as a fourth party.

The first joint meeting was between the Reformed Church in the U. S. Commission and the United Brethren in Christ Commission, and it was a meeting to prepare a Plan of Union. They unanimously agreed to invite as "Visitors" to the next meeting 3 representatives of the Evangelical Synod and 3 representatives of the Evangelical Church. The visitors were not pledged to anything and the idea was that they were to determine for themselves whether or not they would be ready to join in working out a Basis of Union to be presented to each of the four Churches.

1928 - May 31st. The Committee of the Evangelical Synod sent three representatives and the Evangelical Church sent three representatives to this second joint meeting of the Reformed Church Commission and the United Brethren Commission at Harrisburg.

1928 - July 27th. A joint meeting of all the representatives of the four bodies was held at Harrisburg to consider the report of the sub-committee on the Basis of Union.

1928 - Nov. 21st. At another joint meeting of the Four Commissions at Harrisburg the representatives of the Evangelical Church withdrew from the negotiations. They were assured, however, that if at any time they might wish to re-open negotiations the door would always be open.

1928 - Dec. 1st. The first draft of the "Basis of Union" was printed but not released. Informal confidential conferences with district presidents and leaders of all three of the interested churches were carried on.

1929 - Feb. 7th. At a joint meeting of the Three Commissions, at Dayton, Ohio, the final revision of the Basis of Union was completed and adopted without a dissenting vote.

This Basis of Union calls for the formation of a new body, The United Church in America, a name which beckons to other churches to enter its open door.

The United Brethren General Conference will meet at Lancaster, Pa., May 14th to 25th, to vote on the plan. This conference meets every four years.

The General Synod of the Reformed Church in the U. S., meeting in Indianapolis, May 22-29 will vote on the plan. This Synod meets every three years.

The Evangelical Synod will meet in Rochester, N. Y., September 1929, to vote on the plan. This Synod meets every four years.

A copy of the Basis of Union is ^{available for reference.} ~~herewith appended.~~

| | <u>Churches</u> | <u>Members</u> |
|-----------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Evangelical Synod | 1,287 | 314,518 |
| Reformed Church U. S. | 1,709 | 361,286 |
| United Brethren | 2,988 | 377,436 |
| | <u>5,984</u> | <u>1,053,240</u> |
| Evangelical Church | 2,054 | 206,080 |

b - Study of the Reformed Church in the United States.

Pastorius, with a little company of Mystics came to Pennsylvania in 1683 at the invitation of William Penn and founded Germantown.

Samuel Guldin, the first German Reformed minister in this country, preached at Germantown in 1718, and John Philip Boehm held the first recorded communion service at Faleknew Swamp, October 15, 1725. The general condition of the churches was deplorable. The number of divisions was very great, and there were large companies of Mystics.

John Philip Boehm was ordained by the Dutch Reformed ministers of New York on November 23, 1729, with the assent of the Classis of Amsterdam.

The authorities of the Palatinate in Germany appealed to the Classis of Amsterdam and that Classis commissioned Michael Schlatter as a missionary evangelist. He arrived in August 1746. A coetus or synod was organized that year. Opposition to the Holland Church arose due to the death of Boehm and general discouragement.

In 1751 Schlatter returned to Kurpe and collected \$60,000 and six ministers for the Church in Pennsylvania. One of these was Philip W. Otterbein who later organized or rather started the United Brethren in Christ. Here one sees the natural interest between the R. C. U. S. and the U. B. I. C.

This general assistance was conditioned upon subordination to the Classis of Amsterdam and friction developed two distinct parties - Old Side and New Side. Old Side stood for doctrinal regularity. New Side stood for pietism. (Otterbein) In the latter part of the 18th Century the Lutherans under the lead of Muhlenberg began to grow and this made the German Reformed congregations dissatisfied with the conditions of their connection with the Amsterdam Classis. Since it was likewise a heavy burden for the Dutch Churches of New York and New Jersey it was finally decided to cut loose.

The first Synod of the German Reformed Church met at Lancaster, Pa., on April 27, 1793.

With the development of the Protestant Episcopal Church some congregations joined that body, others joined the United Brethren.

Various union movements sprang up with the Dutch Reformed Church, and especially the Lutheran Church at the time of the organization of the first Lutheran Ministerium. This latter union was especially encouraged by the union in 1817 of the Lutheran and Reformed Churches of Prussia. It failed to materialize and after a few years was no longer spoken of. Here we note the children are again speaking to each other.

There was a split in 1822 over the use of the English language, but this was healed by reunion in 1837, and led to the establishing of a Theological Seminary at Mercersburg, Pa., now moved to Lancaster.

Up until 1863 when the Tercentenary of the Heidelberg Catechism was celebrated there was an Eastern and Western Synod.

Just as the Tercentenary of the Reformation in Germany was celebrated by Union with the State Church of Prussia, so here again the Tercentenary of the Heidelberg Catechism was celebrated by union of the two synods into a General Synod.

In 1924 the Reformed Church in the U. S. did a very brave thing. It took over The Hungarian Reformed Church in America, with the exceptions of a few congregations who still sat out under the name "Free Magyar Reformed Church in America".

In Doctrine - Reformed according to the Heidelberg Catechism
 General Synod meets every three years. Meets in May next. 1927.
 Missionary work - China, Japan, Mesopotamia; especially
 strong Home Mission work.

Churches - 1,709
 Members - 361,286 - 44.4% Rural
 Mission budget - \$1,817,921
 Current Expense - 5,670,525
 \$7,488,446
 Per Church - \$4,381
 Seminaries - 3
 No distinct growth since 1916.

c - Study of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ.

In 1746, Rev, Michael Schlatter, a Swiss by birth, was sent as a missionary to the German Reformed Churches in Pennsylvania, although ordained at The Hague and under the general direction of the Synod of Holland. He returned to Holland to appeal for help. Six young men responded. Among them was Philip W. Otterbein. In 1752 he found a field at Lancaster, Pa., in the second most important of the German Reformed Churches.

Early in his pastorate Otterbein passed through a deep personal religious experience. He thereafter insisted upon a deeper inward spirituality among his people.

Soon Otterbein fell in with Martin Boehm, a Mennonite preacher, who had passed through a similar experience. They linked forces and started an Evangelistic campaign in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia.

Cast out into independent churches these men and their followers led a more or less unorganized work for over forty years. In 1800 a distinct ecclesiastical body was formed and called "United Brethren in Christ".

The superintendency of the Church is vested in Bishops, elected every four years at a general conference.

The original theology was Arminian and overtures were made by Bishop Otterbein and Bishop Asbury (Methodist) for a connection with Methodism. The necessity for using the German language frustrated the combination.

Since 1899 it has been lawful to license and ordain women. The itinerate system is enjoined but pastorates are not limited as to time. Pastors are assigned annually.

Missionary work in West Africa, China, Japan, Philippine Islands, and Porto Rico
Churches - 2,988

Members - 337,436 - rural 58.7%

Missions - \$1,228,676

All Purposes - \$6,831,475

Per Church - \$2,286

Seminaries - 1 - Bonebrake, Dayton, Ohio

Colleges - 7

Large growth since 1918.

d - Study of the Evangelical Synod of North America.

This Church is derived from the State Church of Prussia - The United Evangelical Church in Germany.

This State Church in Prussia dates from 1817 when a union of portions of the Lutheran and Reformed Churches was established. This was the achievement of the Tercentenary of the Reformation.

In this union the government of Prussia has always been the leader. This church extends to several other of the German states, but the rest of Germany are too exclusively Lutheran or too exclusively Reformed to unite.

In the United States a branch of the United Evangelical Church was established near St. Louis in 1840. This Church was known at first as the German Evangelical Synod of North America; later the word German was dropped. Before this name was arrived at there were six or seven other names, which are marks to us of as many unions, prior to 1877.

This Church accepts the interpretations of the Holy Scriptures given in the symbolic books of the Lutheran and Reformed Churches in so far as they agree. Where they do not agree liberty of conscience prevails.

The chief governing body is a General Conference which meets every four years.

- Missionary work in Central India and in Honduras.
- Churches - 1,287
- Members - 314,518 - rural 35.2%
- Missions - \$806,135
- All Purposes - \$5,996,347
- Per Church - \$4,659
- Seminaries - 1 - St. Louis, Mo.
- College - 1 - Elmhurst, Ill.
- Loss of members since 1916.

This Basis of Union contemplated upholding on equal parity the teachings of Calvin, Luther, and Arminius. It also does not contemplate any interference with:

congregations
conferences
synods
districts
doctrines
practices

now existent in the three constituent groups.

Opposite to the Basis of Union of the United Church of Canada, it is a plan to unite at the top first, leaving all differences to be worked out afterward.

Within the Reformed Church in the U. S. there has been criticism of the provision for appointment of ministers (IX, 2). The Basis of Union provides that appointment shall be in the hands of the General Superintendent of the Synod and one layman. It is asked that there be some representation of the pastors on the Stationing Committee, as a third party to be heard in such matters.

When the Plan has been approved by regular action of two or more of the negotiating churches action will proceed to the union of the churches so consenting.

CHAPTER IV

- 1 - History of our Relations with the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America.
- 2 - Recent Contacts and Present Status.

1 - History of our Relations with the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A.

Our contacts with the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. dates back to the very beginnings of our denominational life, and have been friendly and cordial. One member of the Commission writes: "The Presbyterians' general attitude has been most liberal toward us".

Following is an outline of the important dates of contact:

- 1743 - Classis of Amsterdam in Holland sought to bring about a union of the Dutch, German, and Presbyterian Churches in America.
- 1744 - Deputies of North and South Holland were in correspondence with the Presbyterian Synod of Philadelphia as to the state of High and Low Dutch Churches in that Province.
- 1783 - Dr. John H. Livingston expressed the desire that some genius equal to the task would arise, to draw a plan for uniting all the Reformed Churches in America into one National Church.
- 1784 - Efforts were made to draw together the Presbyterian, Associated Reformed, 1800 and the Dutch Reformed Churches in America.
- 1785 - Synod's Committee reported that a conference of the three Committees had been held and the foundation for fraternal dealings and Christian neighborhood had been adopted.
The records show much see-sawing back and forth with new Committees - rereading of minutes - until 1800 there was a very brilliant debate running over several days. The whole matter was left in such a wretched state that the Digest of Synodical Legislation is in doubt as to whether the motion to adopt was carried or lost.
- 1822 - New Articles of Correspondence between the Presbyterian and Dutch Churches.

From 1823 on the record is much cluttered with cases of complaint, sometimes about licensing students by one Church when the other has refused, and sometimes about the founding of Presbyterian Churches within Reformed bounds, and sometimes about receiving ministers with insufficient credentials. In all these the record would seem to show that the Presbyterians took the more liberal attitude.

It must be that at some time during this period the Dutch Church "refused to enter agreement with the Presbyterian Church to mutual exclusive operation in communities where one had existence prior to the other", as the Rev. Robert W. Searle has stated in a recent paper.

- 1839 - Our General Synod endorsed the Westminster Catechism.
(Minutes of General Synod of 1839, pp. 261)
- 1867 - Our General Synod again endorsed the Westminster Catechism.
(Minutes of General Synod of 1867, pp. 159)
- 1870 - The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. in three articles definitely approved the Heidelberg Catechism.
(Minutes of General Assembly, 1870 - pp. 20)
- 1873 - Earnest efforts were again made by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. in the form of an Overture:

"Be it RESOLVED, That a Committee of nine be appointed to meet a similar Committee from the General Synod of the Reformed Church, in case such Committee shall be appointed by that body at its approaching sessions, for the purpose of conferring in regard to the desirableness and practicability of Union between the two Churches; and report to the next General Assembly."

- 1873 - Efforts for a general Church Union, with Presbyterian Church (North), with
1874 the Presbyterian Church (South), and with the Reformed Church in the U.S.
(German).
- 1874 - The Reformed Church in America's General Synod voted it was not prepared to effect an organic union with the Presbyterian Church and that the Committee of Conference need not be continued, but that the Presbyterians were invited to revise the Articles of Correspondence. The vote was 58-52.

Since 1874 the relations of the two Churches have been through the medium of the Council of the Reformed Churches in America which was organized in London in 1875.

The First Council of 1877 had present 220 delegates and 80 associates from 43 Churches. The Reformed Church in America was represented.

In 1884 an Executive Commission was constituted. This is divided into two sections, one for North America and the other for the remaining five continents, known as the Western and Eastern Sections. Thus it is known as the "Western Section of the Alliance of the Reformed Churches throughout the World holding the Presbyterian System".

The Articles of Agreement contain much material for historical reference.

- 1906 - Conference in New York of representatives from the Presbyterian Church, North and South, United Presbyterian Church, Cumberland, Reformed Church in America, Reformed Church in the U. S., and a plan of Federation was drawn up.
- 1922 - Articles of Agreement finally amended and adopted. This pledged our Churches to cooperation and union in many places.
- 1926 - March 2-3. At Atlantic City a merger of the Alliance of Reformed Churches throughout the World holding the Presbyterian System (Western Section) and The Council of Reformed Churches in America holding the Presbyterian System was effected, and General Synod, 1926, ratified this action. This is the present basis of cooperation in missions, education, and publication work.

2 - Recent Contacts and Present Status.

Since 1903 the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. has had a Committee or Department of Church Cooperation and Union. It was organized as a Department when the number of boards and agencies was reduced from 16 to 4 general boards. Definite instructions were given the Committee twenty-five years ago to urge other Churches in general to recognize one another as brethren and to cooperate whenever possible; also this specific instruction: "To correspond and secure, if possible, not only closer cooperation, but if at all possible, consolidation with the Reformed Churches and those who are most akin in character".

The Department as now constituted is:

Dr. J. Ross Stevenson, Chairman - Pres. Princeton Seminary
 Dr. Lewis S. Mudge - Stated Clerk of General Assembly
 Dr. William H. Black
 Dr. John A. Marquis
 Dr. Joseph A. Vance
 Dr. William P. Merrill
 Dr. Harlan C. Mendenhall - Stated Clerk N. Y. Presbytery
 Dr. William O. Thompson
 Dr. Hugh Q. Walker - Moderator of General Assembly
 Dr. Henry C. Swearingen
 Elder Dr. Robert E. Speer
 " Dr. John M. T. Finney
 " Mr. Holmes Fosyth
 " Mr. Thomas D. McCloskey
 " Mr. John H. DeWitt

On Monday morning, November 5, 1928, by invitation, Dr. J. Ross Stevenson, Chairman of the Department on Church Cooperation and Union of the Presbyterian

Church in the U. S. A., addressed a public meeting of the Commission in the Assembly Room at the Church House, New York. The address was informing, comprehensive from an historical viewpoint, and saturated with the spirit of the best Christian statesmanship of our day.

In concluding, Dr. Stevenson said:

"I do not wish to be over zealous, but at the same time I would not be true to the Department which I represent, or be true to my Church, if I did not record here my earnest conviction that we ought to be closer in the way of actual cooperation. We owe it to our past; we owe it to our present standards; and we owe it to the world which lieth in the wicked one, because I do not think that any one could claim that denominationalism, as it has existed in this country, has accomplished for Christ what He wants to have done. I feel that we need to get it on our minds and hearts that we are not catching up with the work the Lord has instituted, and while to some union may seem incidental, to those who have it on their minds and hearts to get the work of the Lord done, union is necessary."

Attendance at this meeting taxed the capacity of the Assembly Room and discussion in the meeting and afterward revealed a vital interest among our ministers. Seeing and feeling this, Dr. Stevenson, before he left, suggested that the Commission arrange a joint meeting with representatives of his Department in the interest of direct fact-finding on the part of each body.

At the next meeting of the Commission two weeks later, or November 19th, the Chairman was instructed to communicate further with Chairman Fr. George W. Richards of the Reformed Church in the U. S. and Chairman Dr. J. Ross Stevenson of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. and arrange meetings with their respective committees for mutual fact-finding, with the distinct understanding that we were to make no approaches toward initiating a union movement in either case.

Dr. Stevenson replied to our letter as follows:

"It was a great pleasure to meet with the members of your Commission and to note the earnest and thorough way in which you are taking up this most important matter. Surely we can face the future hopefully in line with our Saviour's prayer, the best traditions of our churches, the clamant

needs of the world, and the message which we hold in trust ... I understand the scope of your mission. You are at liberty to report all the facts you were able to find and the possibility of union is certainly a fact so far as we are concerned. Our chief interest is in the union of our Reformed Churches rather than with a broader union which has to do with outside bodies."

This joint meeting transpired February 7, 1929, in the Assembly Room at the Presbyterian Building, 156 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

Those present from the Presbyterian Church were:

Dr. J. Ross Stevenson
 Dr. Lewis S. Mudge
 Dr. Robert E. Speer
 Dr. William P. Merrill
 Dr. Harlan G. Mendenhall

Those present from the Reformed Church were:

Dr. Harry W. Noble
 Dr. Malcolm J. MacLeod
 Dr. Henry E. Cobb
 Dr. Daniel A. Poling
 Rev. James E. Hoffman
 Rev. Robert W. Searle
 Rev. P. Raymond Clee

The meeting was most cordial and the Presbyterians reflected an earnest desire on the part of their Church toward Union with us. Their wish is revealed in the following quotations made by the members of their Department at this meeting.

Dr. J. Ross Stevenson, the Chairman, stated that his Department has the full support of General Assembly in any endeavor toward Union.

"Between these two churches, with so many likenesses and practically no obstacles, everything is favorable."

Dr. William P. Merrill, of the Brick Presbyterian Church, New York City,

said:

"I am more interested in this proposition than any other of which I have heard. There are two reasons why I am deeply concerned. First, we have come to the point where we must have a demonstration of union so that people will realize that all of this discussion is not merely in the air. These two churches would be a perfect illustration of Organic Union. Secondly, I can see no serious obstacles. The unity of these two churches would indeed be a great blessing to the church life of America, and I vote for it without any reservations."

Dr. Robert E. Speer, Secretary of the Foreign Mission Board, said;

"Because this program is right and Christian the difficulties will be surmountable. There are no hindrances. The strange thing to me is that we have stayed apart so long."

At this first meeting sub-committees were appointed to consider the matter further. At the subsequent meeting the Presbyterians proposed the following plan of procedure:

"The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., meeting in St. Paul, Minnesota, on May 23rd, will send an overture to the Reformed Church in America looking toward Organic Union. Dr. Robert E. Speer will be commissioned to carry that overture to the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, Friday morning, June 7th, at Holland, Michigan."

Your Commission feels that on the part of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. intensely real possibilities of Christian Union have been found. These are facts of supremely vital importance to our denomination at this juncture. When the above facts were presented to the full Commission meeting held in New York City in February, it was the unanimous expression of opinion that we as a Church should look with favor on these Presbyterian proposals.

CHAPTER V

1 - Conclusions.

It would be impossible for any group of men to devote the time and energy to the study of a subject as your Commission has without drawing some conclusions. From the amassing of the foregoing facts we feel you will believe we have been conscientious and diligent. Some of us have changed our convictions. As a result of this year's survey we submit the following as the unanimous conclusions of the Commission.

First - We feel very keenly that the principle adopted by the Commission is the only course:

"No decisive steps shall be taken toward Church Union without substantial unanimity of all sections of our Church."

Second - There is a trend toward Church Union in American Protestantism which prophesies the dawning of a new day in Protestant history.

Adding together the totals of Church membership in communions already united and in communions definitely thinking about merging, and excluding duplications, the total is 17,316,789. Twenty-three per cent of the Protestants of the North American Continent are on the march toward the new day of Church Union.

Third - We find the way to negotiations with the Reformed Church in the U. S. temporarily blocked since our brethren of that denomination have entered into a plan of union with two other bodies outside of our historic denominational family. In view of this your Commission, at its full meeting on February 20, 1929, unanimously passed the following resolution:

"That it be the consensus of this Commission, in view of the negotiations into which the Reformed Church in the United States has entered, that there is no action we can take at this time."

We feel that the new elements now being added to the situation do not appreciably compensate for the resulting confusion in matters of faith and polity that may logically be expected to follow from such a union of Calvinism, Lutheranism, and Arminianism.

The Reformed Church in the United States belongs to the Western Section of the Alliance of Reformed Churches Throughout the World holding the Presbyterian System.

The Evangelical Synod of North America accepts Lutheran Standards of Faith.

The United Brethren in Christ is distinctly Arminian in Faith and Polity.

Fourth - We find on the part of our brethren of the Department of Church Cooperation and Union of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. a unanimous desire to face the question of union with our Church at this time. We believe that if we are to take our rightful place in the union movements of this new day our first responsibility is to consider with favor their overture. Consequently, at the full meeting of your Commission on February 20, 1929, the following resolution was unanimously adopted:

"After careful and prayerful deliberation with the above facts before us, your Commission looks with favor upon Union with the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America."

The representatives of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. seem to believe that their first responsibility lies in our direction. Our Church may, in the Providence of God, hold the key that will start a far-reaching combination of churches in the Presbyterian family. Such situations are usually psychological, and psychological moments are tidal.

Fifth - We believe the Churches as now organized are not catching up with our Lord's work. We believe in Church Union because we believe in releasing the maximum power of Christianity; because we believe that it is more than a mistake and little short of a mortal sin to duplicate in effort, to overlap with agencies and thus to waste with life and treasure. In Christ spiritual unity and physical divisions are contradictory, because Christians cannot be one and yet apart, and because schisms are a stumbling block to men. We believe the Kingdoms of this earth will not become the Kingdom of our Lord and his Christ until "like a mighty army moves the Church of God" becomes more than a poet's fancy and a marching song.

A scientific survey made by the Federal Council of Churches shows that these are days of conservation rather than advance for nearly all churches. (See pamphlet, Data Book, December 1928, pp.88)

In our own Church retrenchment is in the saddle, and retrenchment will never get the work of our Lord done.

Sixth - While it is always difficult to measure spiritual values, we believe such measures can be found in the two most conspicuous examples of Church Union of recent years - the United Lutheran Church and the United Church of Canada.

In the ten years' existence of the United Lutheran Church there has been a growth in membership of 59%; in benevolences of 131%; and in current expense giving of 180%. ~~This has been achieved with a greatly increased cost of operation.~~ The spiritual values have easily carried the material, and throughout the membership of 1,214,340 there is a spirituality which is unprecedented and new.

Dr. George C. Pidgeon, the first Moderator of the United Church of Canada, says, in the Christian Herald of March 23, 1929:

"A specialist in religious education has just told the writer that in the course of his work through the past year he has met fifty or more young ministers of the United Church whose ministry has taken a new purpose since Church Union.

Looking over the history of the United Church of Canada for the past three and a half years, we have every reason to thank God and take courage. Serious difficulties have faced us at every stage of our progress, but they have been overcome. The fruits are satisfying. The union is a glorious spiritual reality, and the contribution which it is already making to the Kingdom of God in Canada marks it as one of the most significant steps ever taken in the history of the Church of Christ."

Seventh - To sum up our conclusions we can do no better than quote the words of

Dr. Daniel A. Poling, a member of the Commission.

"We believe in Church Union because God wills it, Christ prayed for it, and world redemption waits on its consummation."

"If this counsel or this work be of men,
It will come to nought;
But if it be of God, Ye cannot overthrow it;
Lest haply ye be found even to fight against God."

Acts 5:38,39.

Unanimously and respectfully submitted by General Synod's Special

Fact Finding Commission on Christian Union:

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Rev. Charles E. Bloodgood
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